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B. L. angl. p. 213.

THE
W O M A N
OF
H O N O R.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

V O L U M E III.

Letters bring things more home, and represent them more to the life, than either Annals or Lives.

BACON, *Lord VERULAM.*

L O N D O N,

Printed for T. LOWNDES, at N^o 77,
in Fleet-street;

And W. NICOLL, at N^o 51, in
St. Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXVIII.

BIBLIOTHECA

REGIA

MONACENSIS.

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Bacon, Lord Verulam.

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MEMOIRS
OF A
WOMAN of HONOR.

VOLUME III.

LETTER XXVIII.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE, *Esq;* to the
Marquess of SOBERTON.

My Lord Marquess, Gloucestershire.

OUR letter has given me
Y great pain, on more accounts
than one. But let me reply
to it in order, point for point, in the
hopes that considering how essential most

VOL. III.

B of

2 L. GREVILLE, *Esq; to*

of the matters are which draw from me this answer, you will forgive its unconscionably exceeding all the common limits of a letter. It is then rather an epistolar pamphlet, that I am offering to you in virtue of that authority of friendly advice which you have not disdained to continue to me.

I am very sorry, though not at all surpris'd, at My-lord Duke's receiving no material benefit from the Spaw-waters. That Dr. Addle, in whom your father places so implicit a confidence, has, it seems, for a last resource, after he has done all the mischief he can to his patient's constitution by his prescriptions of worse than only ineffectual medicines, the rage of sending them to any waters that occur to his imagination, without

without the shadow of reason or propriety.

I dare aver, that there can hardly a disease be named, to which the Spaw, must not, on the plainest rules of common-sense, be more likely to be unfavorable than salutary. That many sick have returned thence, with their disorders diminished, or even cured, I make no doubt, but not from any good that could be fairly attributed to the waters. They have, on those occasions, the merit of a victory to which they contributed nothing, nay, ofteneft obtained in spite of them; a circumstance in common to them with many a physician, who boasts of curing where he could not kill, though two against one, the disease and himself. A villainous marshy situ-

ation, down in a vale, with an air confined by the furrounding mountains, and waters only the worse for their being impregnated with harsh metalline particles, not only difficultly assimilable, but so likely to throw their weight unfavorably into the ballance of the solids against the fluids, afford not one satisfactory reason why such a place should be recommendable for the recovery of health. Nor is this my opinion singular. The judicious *Rhedi*, who was one of the first of the phisicians, in these latter ages, that endeavoured to restore his art to the simplicity of nature, and endeavored it in vain, makes the following perfectly sensible remark on them,

“ Those so much boasted mineral
“ waters, always leave in the human
“ body

“ body a great part of their *mineral*
“ *saburra.*”

Your Lordship, even without that tincture of natural philosophy in which you so much delight, and with no more than the plain lights of reason, must easily conclude that such particles, only the more pernicious for their minuteness, must make a dreadful havock in the small capillary vessels, on which the great principles of life capitally depend, and into which the fluid in which they swim, compell the admittance of these hostile inmates. To old age, their desiccative astringency must be highly injurious, and increase the obstructions and rigescence already too natural to that time of life. Nor indeed do I conceive any age, or any distemper, in

which they can do other than harm, except perhaps in the soft relaxed system of young children, or of girls eaten up with the green-sickness; in granting which, I am not very clear, that I do not grant too much.

Sure I am, however, that some Noblemen of the first distinction, whose cases were, I may say, palpably opposite to the prescription of them, may be said to have perished, or at least, in all human probability, to have had their death accelerated by the use of them. If ever the light of a truly phisical enquiry should be carried into this subject, I have strong reasons to believe that these waters, and many other thermal, chalybeate, and mephitic, now in vogue in a medical intention, will be banished into
the

the wide and lamentable domains of chimera, together with the virtues of asses milk, of bezoar, of pearl, and that childish trick of Riverius, by which he got an estate, of the effervescence of lemon juice, faturated with salt of wormwood, and a multitude of other articles, worse than only unserviceable, which here is not the place to particularise to you.

It must surely give an alarming pain to humanity to think, that while the laws are so punctiliously attentive to the defence of property, they take so little care of preserving that health without which there can be no enjoyment of property. Would any one believe, that the lives of the subjects should be left exposed, as they actually are, under

such insufficient guard, to credulity on one side, and to ignorance, or mercenary imposture, on the other? How easy, but especially how necessary a measure of state would that be, to erect a tribunal of magistrates of health, for the protection of that inestimable benefit of nature?

Who can remember, without shuddering with horror, that two of the highest class of life perished, not long since, under, and not quite impossibly, by such an infernal prescription as that of brown paper in milk, boiled away to a third, for a disorder, which it was more likely to give than to cure?

I could name to your Lordship one Nobleman, recently deceased, who had,
long

long before his death, lost the use of all his limbs, by his fatal listening to the promises of a quack, whose drug was rank poison. The tortures and murders by these false pretences are innumerable, while scarce a day passes without the boast of new specifics, which, in spite of the averred proved inefficacy and perniciousness of the old ones, still find fresh bubbles and fresh victims.

Nor let me be so unjust as to impute exclusively to quackery and empiricism, mischiefs from which the rational phisic, as it is most falsely called, is itself far from exempt; the present theory of it, and especially of the powers of the various articles of pharmacy, being so demonstrably groundless and wrong, that a very eminent professor of

10 L. GREVILLE, *Esq;* to

the art said, with perfect justice, that he was the greatest physician who had the least faith in physic as it now stands. Another also, of a well-deserved reputation, confessed, he was in most cases more embarrassed about prescribing what should not hurt, than what could relieve the patient. In the present practice, the regulars prescribe upon a false judgment, the quacks upon no judgment at all; and it is of these last that mankind must questionless have the least bad bargain, if it be true, that the march of scientific error must be uniformly wrong; whereas, though the odds against any good from the blindness of ignorance are extremely great, it is not, however, impossible, that the round of chance may produce a happy hit.

In

In this age of dictionaries, a well-reasoned *index expurgatorius*, or dictionary of the medicines that are not to be trusted to in the diseases for which they are generally prescribed, or indeed to be trusted at all, would not be an undesirable work, and might help to atone for the thousands of superfluous or pernicious ones, with which the public is incessantly pestered. Nor would the list be a short one of the pretended remedies those domestic traitors, taken into our service on a false character, and infamous for their breaches of trust, to us at our greatest need. In short, nothing can hardly be more essential to mankind, than a new *rationale* of pharmacy, combined with a new theory of physic: both, as things are, being de-

monstrably false, according to reason, and, what I hope no one will deny, according to experience.

I should imagine, too, that whoever had power enough of persuasion to explode but a single noxious article of our present common system of diet, however generally received, or rather with the more reason for its being generally received, could hardly deserve much less of universal society, than those fabled heroes of antiquity, who could have at best but the local temporary merit of delivering a country, or part of a country, from some wild beast, like that of Gevaudan, whose ravages must be incomparably less extensive, less durable, and, perhaps, considering the torments and death accelerated by diseases, intrinsically

sically not more horrid. But even the hopes of such a success are denied by man to man, ever his own greatest enemy, and ever more ready to be persuaded to his harm than to his good. Slight and ridicule are probably but the least cruel return that would await the attempt. A pleasing, though pernicious habit of the palate will for ever carry it against the vain protest of the human stomach and constitution.

I return your Lordship many thanks for your effectual exertion in favor of Mr. Mowbray, whose success is the more unexpected for the justice of his claim. Besides, he was in all respects too worthy a man not to despair of having any thing done for him. What shadow is there for merit to hope a recompence,

compence, either among those who do not know it, or among those who are hurt at it? Add, that by most of our pleasant Great, beneficence to men of real worth is considered in the repugnant light of a lawful demand; whereas, their serving fools has more the air of paying a gaming debt, to say nothing of the favorable circumstance of their being more congenial to them.

Mr. Mowbray, however, is perfectly sensible, that he owes to your private interest that success which was his due, from the public spirit of the Minister, if he had been capable of any, and has accordingly written to me in the terms of the utmost gratitude to your Lordship.

To

To your remarks on Pensions I need add nothing here, except that while the whole encouragement from the Government to Literature, or to useful talents, hardly amounts to a miserable thousand a year, that very Government suffers some hundreds of thousands of the public money to be extorted from it by the pernicious influence, or the impudent worthlessness of subjects, who never did their country five farthings worth of service, nor are capable of it; which last circumstance is, however, the only apparent reason for some of them thus quartered on it. This suggestion you will not think exaggerated, if you will yourself be at the pains to cast up all the Pensions, Annuities, Reversions, Sine-cures, or, what
is

is next to Sine-cures, offices of which the salaries and perquisites are enormously disproportioned to the public service done for them, with all the various shapes into which the pillage of the nation is methodically put, and which the Dictionary of La Crusca so emphatically and so justly calls *il pan di tradimento*, the bread of treason : that black bread, for which few are now so squeamish, as not to have an ever-open stomach. After all, is not that infamous avarice oftener than vanity itself, at the bottom of the rage of such numbers to get a seat where they abundantly prove themselves to have been less tempted by the honor of doing their duty to their country, than by what they project to get by betraying it ? And this, like the
chamber-

chambermaid's putting into a lottery, they call being in Fortune's way.

As to that low, beggarly levee-scene which you describe, it has something too shocking in it to be only ridiculous, when one considers that the great offices in this country, with all the numerous train of consequences to its welfare, are villainously bought and sold among personages so scandalously mean, as to descend to an attendance there, and to make circle to some worthless Minister, whose sole title to superiority over them, is his impudence to presume it, on the strength of a Court-favor, ofteneft solely owing to his undertaking the sacrifice of the national interest.

Who can forbear laughing, on reading occasionally in the public papers,
those

those most important pieces of intelligence, numerous Levies being held by little, trifling mushroom-ministers, whom, so far from not disdaining to attend, a man of any spirit or taste would think himself dishonored or miserable, if he was condemned to keep no better company?

This is one of the blessed effects of that new form of Government, which has crept into existence, through the breach of our constitution, in resting the whole power of the state on the single point, not of parliamentary influence over affairs, but of an undue influence over the Parliament itself, in favor of some view opposed to the interest of the nation, and often to that of the Court itself, too avaritious, or too ignorant to see,

see, that in ungratefully pursuing the detriment of that nation to which it was owing all its greatness, it was in fact implicitly seeking its own destruction.

The sublime project of fleecing the people by Charles the Second, to support the stupid libertinism of his court; or of William the Third's continental attachments, covered by the pretext of frustrating those schemes of universal monarchy, which were by us so devoutly to be wished for in Lewis the Fourteenth, the man on earth the least likely to effectuate so frantic a chimæra; and lastly, in the two late reigns, that system, the most absurd, the most cruel, the most ruinous for all parties, of everlastingly taking German troops into British pay; such projects, I say, give
you

you most plainly and most truly the whole foundations of that detested corruption, which, in time, not only brought on the national debt to the enormous point at which we now see it, but made of the Sovereign a kind of slave to any Minister, who, on the strength of his interest to carry, by a majority in the House of Commons, those great trustees of the burfal power, that capital court-point of draining the country of its clearest treasures, and of plunging it over head and ears in debt, and into wars, which were the false pretext for creating and encreasing that debt, might, in every other matter of state, use him like a Negroe, nay worse, like an accomplice in so foul a scheme.

By this means the royal authority fell debased and dishonored into the hands

hands of some private subject, often odious to the Sovereign, but necessary to him in that criminal view, and whose trusty circle of agents, dependents, and subalterns, constituted an impudent oligarchy, which received the new and improper denomination of Ministry; among whom most commonly no one had so little interest as the Sovereign himself, who was compelled to continue them in his service while their patron's power lasted in the House of Commons, which was the sole tenure of it at Court, and reduced the Sovereign, though certainly not without its being originally his own fault, to a difficulty of distinguishing which were his subjects and which his Minister's.

The following farce has often, my Lord, diverted me, not very good-naturedly

naturedly I confess, for the extreme dulness and folly of it; I mean the progress of a political adventurer, or the generation of a Minister out of the corruption of a Patriot.

A Member, especially of the Lower House, assembles others, lays before them pathetically the grievances of the nation. All he says is unfortunately but too just. Satisfied with the truth of his allegations, and detesting the Minister of whose party they are not; and consequently not in place, they choose this new opponent for their leader, and list under his banners. Soon his party increases: the public, whose good is the state watch-word, and always credulous, though so often cheated, fortifies it with its voice. He is now in
pass

pass to gall a Ministry, and sometimes to overset it. In which last case, the Court feels a necessity of purchasing its peace of him; and its gates are set open on the easiest terms it can make. The stipulation once concluded, in which the good of the nation has not the compliment paid to it of being so much as mentioned, the conqueror sneaks in, and often drops his really best friends, leaving them like footmen at the door, who might be astonished at seeing him turn so short, if the thing was not quite so common: I call these his really best friends, who have the honor of a fate in common with that of their sacrificed country, in being left out of the villainous treaty. Those he takes in with him are rather worse off, since they share the infamy of deserting the public cause,

cause, an infamy not quite improperly compensated by a poor temporary precarious post, which their eternally lost character and influence, soon make it so easy to take from them without much ceremony or much consequence.

This nauseous game I have, my Lord, seen so often played, that I should wonder the public was not sick of it, if I did not know it so much more seldom led by its reason than driven by its passions, for which unfortunately the benefit of experience does not seem to be made. But what exceeds all bounds of ridicule is the strut of insolence, the airs of state assumed by the successful adventurer. And yet in what is it that the most wretched employ of scribbling in a white-limed garret, by the light of a farthing
can-

candle, with no sustenance but a red herring and small beer, is not even an honorable occupation, compared to that of catch-penny patriotism? We hang a man, who, to defraud a private subject of his money, is guilty of a single act of forgery of hand: but a man is advanced to the first posts of the kingdom, who, to cheat, or to abet the cheating the public of theirs, is guilty of a whole course of forgeries of heart. He will even have cheated it of more than its money, of one of the greatest of all human goods, of its esteem, of which he will have made no better use, than to sell the too credulous people, like sheep at a market, while, sillier than sheep, they will too often stand to be fleeced, without bleating.

Read, my Lord, but with attention, our history from Charles the First down to the present period, and you will constantly find some Court-point that was, at the same time, an unnational one; which was felt enough to put this country into a state of defensive war against the court, and against its accomplices, in form of minister or ministers, who sold to the much mistaken sovereign an assistance, doubly treacherous, in its being at once detrimental to their country and to himself.

The Marquess d'Argenson has very justly observed, that this new system of government by ministries, has obtained in many parts of Europe, as well as with us. True. But the difference is, that in other countries it is owing to the indolence of despotism; in ours, to the corruption of liberty; while so many members of the senate, whose duty it is

is to consider themselves as the lawful judges and comptrollers of the ministry, in duty bound, not only themselves to do no wrong to the nation, but to see that no one else does any, too often sink so low, as themselves to take their impulsion from it, and suffer their votes to be as currently canvassed, presumed, and undertaken for, as the drudgery of the arrantest slaves, whose bodies being venal may be only a misfortune, whereas a venal soul can never be less than a guilt. A dominion over the understanding is a trust unalienable to any mortal, and especially to such an one as can have no reason to pretend to it, unless to make of it an use pernicious to his country. It is even treasonable to enslave, on any account, the dignity and the eminence of parliamentary rank. As it is, opinions in general are not anticipated from reason, but from interest, humor, prejudice, connexion, party, from every thing,

in short, but the one thing needful, a regard for country.

From this remissness or falsity of too many of the trustees of the public cause, it is, that this originally mushroom-power of the ministry has lately gained such a cedar-height. The government itself has currently taken the air and form of the system of Tonquin, in which there are two kings, the nominal, or king *de jure*, called the *Bua*, the other the king *de facto*, called the *Civa*, or first minister, who dispatches all affairs, and is the great *Factotum* of the state.

Many of our late Sovereigns have, in favor of some unnational point to be carried, against their own clearest interest, most humbly acquiesced in being nothing more under their Minister than what the Roman Consuls were under the Emperor in the times of Imperial Rome. The public acts were,
indeed,

indeed, still loaded with their names, while they had no more power than what some of our minister-ridden monarchs have had over a servant from whom they were obliged to take their orders, before they could give them; and who, to mend the matter, was not always their own choice; but elected for them, like the Dey of Algiers, by his influence among the mercenaries.

Such a place, a place possessed by such a tenure, is, in all conscience, contemptible enough: but what can you think of the men of rank and fortune, who can, without the excuse of indigence, be mean enough to hold up his train, and act in quality of his subalterns, abettors, and accomplices, with some ministerial sheep-mark upon them, in form of place or pension, that obviates the question of *Cujum pecus?* *an Melibæi?* a poor mutton-headed flock,

ready to follow any bell-weather, and jump for interest after any party, whether of court or country.

Is it not, then, owing to this execrable system, that we now see the nation lie like a carcase almost picked to the bone, the ravens driven away from which, keep croaking at the vultures in possession, who are preying on their miserable leavings?

Soon, nay, perhaps already, power must go a begging with no one to take it in, it stinks so of the rottenness of the times. Men of less public spirit than Phocion will be afraid of Phocion's fate, who perished for having occasionally taken the helm, in what he himself called the wreck of the State.

In short, my Lord, I see no resource for the salvation of this country, but one, which I represented to my Lord Duke some years ago, which, he entirely approved,

proved, and which nothing but his ill state of health hindered him from pushing with all his power: This was, a constitutional plan for a parliamentary exertion, in a proper manner. Pray heaven it may not be too late! For even the noblest remedy may lose its efficacy and character, by being delayed till the disease shall have turned for death. Every other recourse to oligarchical combinations will most likely be found a paucity and dangerous palliation.

I was unlucky enough to state this notion of mine to Lord Walsley, just to divert myself with hearing what I was sure he would say; nor did he disappoint me. His answer was perfectly in character. He said, he was assured it would not do, the face of the times was so set against it. For this I heartily forgave, and even pitied him; for the very idea was enough to sweat him. It is not easy to persuade men of the good

to result from efforts of which they feel themselves incapable. Every thing tending to greatness of spirit is lost upon little minds; they are incapable of strength or elevation. A Willow will never be an Oak, nor a Butterfly an Eagle, nor a Trifler a Statesman.

I shall punctually observe the orders you gave me for making Mrs. Williams a genteel present, for the compliment of keeping her apartments for you against the next races, an offer which I do not wonder at your not accepting.

To say nothing less than the truth, races, in their present state of amazing stupidity, would be even beneath your scorn, for scorn implies notice, but for the real mischief it does to both the mobs, the little and the great.

The common people, in the country, it robs of much more manly diversions than that of silly gaping at running horses.

horses. It takes them off from wrestling, leaping, bowling, throwing the bar, and other rural sports, which render the body robust, and qualify them for exercises of the militia, that only constitutional army of Britain, which, to be effective, should, conformably to the original institutes of Nobility, be officered by the men of the first titles and rank in the kingdom, who, if they were in earnest, would soon give it a discipline as formidable as that of the regulars, or standing army, which springing out of the corruption of the feudal government, after its dissolution, might almost make that form regretted, with all its train of evils and inconveniencies. It has actually enslaved France; but Britain it has hitherto only beggared, which leads at least to slavery.

But as to the men of fashion, or rank, who have run into a folly so very wretch-

ed, that it has not even the excuse of leading to any pleasure which taste would not spurn with disdain, what would it be to me, to you, or to the nation, that this, or that titled ideot of fortune, should make it his ruling passion, and court distinction, from so miserable a futility, but for the melancholic consideration, that the absurdity of every individual contributes in some measure to form the general mass of worthlessness, and helps to establish a contemptible character of the times? In which view, where men of power and influence are wrong-headed, their private folly may be deemed a public calamity.

While men of real good sense, and worthiness of character, sensible that attention to business, and to improvement, requires, at intervals, the relief of diversions, but at the same time convinced,
that

that the essence of the soul consists in the act of thinking, look out for such manly amusements as may satisfy that at once noble and agreeable faculty ; the little fry of triflers are on the hunt for nothing so much as for such objects as may furnish them with matter of not thinking ; such as cards, races, and the like futilities.

As to races, the pretext of their being of use to preserve the breed of a very valuable animal, may originally have been just : but I can hardly imagine any one driveller enough to attribute that motive to the present heroes of the turf. They would laugh at any one that would do them the unjust honor of but suspecting them of it. No. The current system of the rage of betts, is grown the primary consideration, and is nothing better than a vile ingraftment of avarice, on a stupid stock of vanity.

The great sporters at the races, have no more in their head the idea of keeping up the breed of horses, than gamblers while they are stripping their bubbles at play, have that of encouraging the manufacturers of cards and dice.

A plea of much the like validity, was offered in defence of the Beargarden, and Hockley in the Hole, importing in substance, that the preservation of the national valor depended on the encouragement given to the noble entertainment of a couple of the lowest wretches, under the name of bruisers, mounting a stage, and heroically fighting at fifty-cuffs for the house, that is to say, for the money taken at the door, from such as could find an amusement in so interesting and so curious a fight; and this, I can assure you, though it may seem incredible to you, that some of them were of the highest classes of life. But avarice,
in

in its true character, of there being nothing so low to which it will not stoop, crept in here too, and produced its betts, which became the principal fauce of the tasteless diversion.

A pitiful complaisance, however, to the follies of the great, erected these black-guard battles into the dignity of the pugilate of the antients, with about as much propriety as the races of New-market may be compared to the hippodromes, or chariot-races of the Circus, before the degenerate times of Rome. And even then the factions of the various colors of the charioteers liveries turned more upon the humor of opposition than upon the vile admixture of any pecuniary considerations ; the laying betts being left, with great propriety, to the dregs of the people.

The sad low nonsense of these boxing-matches grew, however, to such a
pitch,

pitch, and was attended with so many bad consequences, and especially that of raising no spirit so eminently as the spirit of highwaymen and footpads, that the legislature interfered to put it down; nor would it be very honorable to the British valor to suppose that it has suffered in the least by the suppression.

Not that by this I would insinuate any wish of mine, that the races, with all their train of inconveniences and evils, should undergo the like fate: let them rather die of themselves, die of the disease the most common and most fatal to such entertainments, their own rank intrinsic dulness and insipidity.

Besides, my Lord, such an intervention might alarm the whole nation of the Dunces, for their inestimable privilege of worthlessness. To them it would have an air of persecution for their religion of bagatelle, that would only make them

them cleave to it the closer. Unfortunately, too, for them, they have to plead the examples of some men of very good sense, who have indulged themselves in this amusement; but then those ideots never stand to consider the distinction between throwing some trifling into life, and one's whole life into trifling. A man that would never let himself down to play the fool, would neither be the happiest nor the wisest man in the world. Amusements, as amusements, are even necessary, but it is only for fools to exalt them into occupations, on the plan of seeking in them a diversion which they are condemned never to find, from their never having had serious employment, without which the word itself, Diversion, is an absurdity. Who can be diverted that has not had business from which to be diverted? Or will any one call the dreary waste of a fool's life diversion? And yet if you was to take from
them

them their horses, dogs, dice, cards, drefs, loungings at a court, small-talk, electioneering vanity, in fhort, all the futilities of falfe tafte, of filly oftentation, and mean avarice, what would you leave them, but an uncomfortable defart of the head and heart, in which they would lofe themfelves? The vaft dominions of Dulnefs are their native country, out of which they would pine like the Swifs with their *Hemfueb*. A Greenlander would as foon renounce the eternal ice of the Pole; a Negroe the fuffocating heats of the Line; an Arab his barren fands; a Hottentot his guts and garbage, as a fool his ftupid nonsense, and his ridiculous connections of folly. Conftitutionally unfufceptible of great views, they constantly prefer the ignoble eafe of worthleffnefs to that heroic fatisfaction which is to be found in public utility, the only genuine parent of public efteem, and can fit down contented with
the

the infamy of never being so much as thought of, or named, by judges of merit, for any place of trust or eminence, which, however, I must own, is not unfrequently the cause of their being chosen into one by a Minister, for his service, and for the misfortune of their country.

Another curse which attends them, is, that in the truly tame and faint character of mediocrity, being generally destitute of all original spirit, they are condemned for life to a servile instinct of imitation, from which, though vainly fond of distinguishing themselves, they dare do nothing but what they see others do. This alone would make it impossible for them to be great men, while they congenially take one another for models, and are contagiously good for nothing. Thence so many men of rank continue grovelling all their lives. If their private influence, or the public misfortune, puts
power

power or trust into their hands, incapable of raising themselves to an equality with their offices, they bring those offices down to their own level, and render them as contemptible as themselves.

Some again there are, whose natural levity forbidding them any resting place, they are for ever subject to wandering fits, like the Norway rats, and wishing to be any where but just where they are: fidgetting about, light as feathers, the sport of every idle unmeaning gust of fancy, now wafted over sea, now blown about town and country, till they take ground for ever.

Such, or the like characters, the great point, my Lord, is to pity and not resemble them, especially while their example is rather a living lesson of every thing one would wish not to be.

I am very sensible to the honor you do me of approving and even adopting
my

my idea of the benefit, which must obviously result from occasionally treating, in letters to intimate friends, of subjects, as they occur to you. Among my political reveries there is hardly any that strikes me in a more favorable light, than that of its being made a standing order of the Cabinet-Council, that every Officer of the State, in a great employ, and especially our Ministers at foreign Courts, should annually give in, upon honor, his opinion on the public affairs, not only of his own department, but in general of the whole State. Such a practice might serve at once to give a satisfactory idea of the talents and abilities of the persons employed, and often occasionally to contribute useful lights to the government itself. You will, perhaps, object that some might elude this ordinance by employing Secretaries, or Writers for them. True; but even the merit of making a good choice
of

of such would not be a small one. It would also serve to kindle a noble emulation, and excite many to acquire talents which they now see they may as well do without, or indeed better, considering the umbrage and offence taken by little people in power at any eminence of that kind. Such an institute, combined with the revival of that admirable policy once in practice, of selecting young Gentlemen of the greatest hopes from our Universities, to be bred in foreign parts, for public employment, might possibly restore to this nation its antient character of breeding great men for the cabinet as well as for the field, or at least preserve it from the shame and damage of being served by the meanest and most disqualified personages, Embassadors that cannot speak, and Secretaries of State that cannot write.

I come

I come now, my Lord, and I presume you will think it high time, to that capital part of your letter which acquaints me of your new passion for Miss Maynwaring, and of your procedure on it, with her answer.

I am as far from the injustice of not distinguishing in your favor between those things you cannot help, and those you can, as I am from the perfidiousness to you of soothing and encouraging you to persevere in what you do yourself the honor of confessing to be wrong.

I do not, then, at all blame you for that weakness which is nothing but what you have in common with the rest of mankind, of being momentarily subdued by a superior attraction, real or imaginary. But, I own, I should expect from the Marquess of Soberton's power of reason such a victorious effort as would distinguish him from the multitude,

titude, who on the like occasion are irrecoverably hurried away. Such an effort as would restore him to all his virtue, with only the greater lustre for his having triumphed over a passion which, circumstanced as you are, is so dangerous an enemy to it.

I say circumstanced as you are, because I fairly own, that but for your engagement to Lady Harriet, which, for many reasons well known to your Lordship, is gone too far to be retracted with honor, I would not have a single reason to object to a choice that would so nobly justify any sacrifice you could make to it. I say nothing of that beauty of her's, which, to judge of it by its effect on your Lordship, must be great indeed; but considering only that simplicity of principle, that clearness of spirit, with which she has treated your offer, I am ready to allow that there can be no fortune

tune or rank to which she is not at least equal, especially if you take into the account the mediocrity of her condition, which only exalts her the more. Clara on a throne, could not be more intrinsically majestic, than in her procedure towards you. Here the dignity is all her own. Her strict honor, while it is fatal to your love, justifies, at least, your choice, which to a mind so noble as your's must be some consolation, and will, I hope, prove a not unprofitable incentive to imitation.

For, after all, not to flatter yourself, have you laid stress enough on your engagement to Lady Harriet? Could Clara, looking on it very justly as having proceeded too far to be retracted with honor, receive your addresses in any other light than those of a virtually married man? You may observe I say nothing of her particular situation with respect

spect to Lady Harriet, which might, however, have had its share in her determination.

In your desistence then, from your pursuit, the more hopeless the better for you, as it is an argument the more for your desistence. You obtain the double good of proving your manly power over yourself, and of purchasing, though with the privation of a great pleasure, an escape from a pain that must over-ballance it, if the duration of one may be set against the momentary excess of the other. For, after all, your success with Clara could never have bred more than a temporary suspension of your remorse for your treatment of that most worthy, and most amiable Lady Harriet, whose consent to give up her claim to you, considering her unquestionable and innocent love for you, would only have redoubled your guilt toward her. That compunction
then

then would, to one of your sensibility, have been a perrennial fountain of bitterness, in which the torch of love would have run a great risque of being cruelly extinguished. Nothing being more unjust than the passions you would perhaps have, at the best tacitly, made Clara accountable to you for the failure of which you would yourself have seduced her into the being your accomplice. You would, and not quite without reason, suspect her of having yielded to your propofals upon other motives than those of love. Then would she, in your esteem, sink into the ordinary class of women, especially of her pretentions as to fortune and condition, to whom the advantages of such a match would have been an invincible temptation not to examine over-scrupulously the objections to it. But, above all, you would have found it difficult to reconcile yourself to yourself. Your deliverance then, by Clara's noble procedure, from

so lasting a torment to you, as your own just reflexions would have been, is perhaps not a less happiness than your accomplishing your purposes with her, as great a bliss as I should readily own that must have been, but for that poison of self-reproach, which it might indeed deaden for a while, but never entirely kill. Soon would it recover its power to prove to you, that a pleasure, necessarily short-lived, when purchased at the expence of honor, is not the best of bargains for a long repentance, inevitably consequential to the weakness of not having enough respected so sacred a principle,

Nor think, my Lord, that in this I am crudely, and even inhumanly taxing you with a breach of honor. No. I am rather congratulating you on your happiness, in having made such a worthy choice, in the person of Clara, as has defended you from that precipice, defended

fended you against yourself. I have before allowed, and very justly allowed, that such weaknesses are a tribute which the greatest of men are liable to pay to human nature, inasmuch that the first steps are absolutely not in their power, and those first steps too often insensibly betray them into ulterior ones, which consummate their fall. You have been evidently in the first case, and very fortunately are not in the second : so that, now to proceed, while you have so fair an opening for retreat, would be in you a determinate will to act against your own sense of right, which is what I do not in the least fear for you. It is only for weak minds, like weak constitutions, not to expell the poison they have once imbibed : but your established superiority to that class, does not leave you that sad excuse.

I do not then hope too much from you. For as to that character of invincibility, which the modern Tragedy-writers, and Novelists, have, in their crazy fancy, bestowed upon the passion of Love, and of which that numbing frigidity, with which they in general treat of it, proves that they never knew what love was, nothing is more false, especially with regard to great men. Heroes, you may find in history, have not been more exempt than others, from a passion which, of all the human passions, has the most to say for itself. You will find too, that some have gone great lengths of inconsiderateness and folly, for the objects of their attachment; but you will find few, or none of them, such desperately true *lovers* as to put themselves theatrically to death with the dagger or bowl, merely for being *crossed in love*. You may, indeed, now and then, read in our news-papers of a love-lorn

lorn chamber-maid, applying for relief to her garter, or a flighted apprentice taking the lover's leap into the next pond; but rarely of any above their rank of life, or their size of understanding, playing the fool in that manner. Nor can there be a truer, though so trite a proverb, than that the bell rarely tolls for those who die of love. The bills of mortality do not so much as admit it among the diseases which "flesh is heir to."

All this I mention, my Lord, you may easily perceive, not most certainly, as supposing you in the case of such nonsense, but merely to take from you any scruple about an extraordinariness of procedure in your suffering so many superior considerations, but especially that of honor, to overcome a passion, in which, without very sufficient reasons for breaking its hold, I readily admit that constancy is even a virtue.

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If

If tragedy and romance dealt more on truth, and consequently more in nature, or if they paid their court more to the virtues than to the weaknesſes of mankind, they would, oftener than they do exemplarily represent, in the most amiable, and in the most encouraging light, ſuch characters as do perhaps more honor to human kind, in their conquest over violent paſſions, than in that total exemption from them, which is much more frequently the effect of imbecility, than of a perfection, at least too rare among mere mortals, to afford hopes of imitation. I should, for example, imagine, that the continency of a Scipio, would be a ſubject, if handled by a real genius, to the full as intereſting, and much more edifying than that of an Anthony loſing the world for love, or rather for a luxurious attachment, for of love he had not virtue enough to be ſuſceptible. And by the by, well con-
sidered,

sidered, what does the story of his amours with Cleopatra present, but that of one of the most detestable, profligate, and withall stupid cullies, whose name ever fouled the pages of history, ruining himself for an abandoned woman, to whom the title of Queen was but a reproach the more, notorious only for pride without honor, intrigues without love, prodigality without taste, talents without application, and artifice without common sense, a character, in short, somewhat of the air and hue of his own, in which what brilliancy there ever appeared was that of a jet-black? Could then the fall of the mean murderer of Tully, of the execrable conspirator with Cesar against the liberty of his country, provoke any sentiment, but that of a regret of his not having expired on a gibbet, or of his not having lain broken alive on a wheel? I know this is digressive, but I am carried away by my indignation,

on my recollection of his catastrophe having been too tenderly treated, on the theatre, by some excellent authors. I allow, however, that some poetical justice there was in the historical truth of things, since he was brought to his death, tho' a death not equal to his crimes, by one of his own gang, that cowardly and cruel in cold blood, Augustus, whose successes, as they are called, were the ruin not only of his own family, which would indeed have been nothing more than a just visitation, but of the greatest republic, that with so many vices compensated by so many virtues, rendered every thing relative to it interesting in its favor, till sinking into slavery, its annals, after that period, became of as little account or estimation as the Sessions-papers of the Old-Baily; the reproach of humanity, the disgrace of history, and the scorn of curiosity.

But

But that by the by. It may, however, without any flattery to mankind, be averred, that the cure of Love, conquered by virtue, is not so extremely rare, as Poets, Novelists, and Romance-writers would persuade us, in their records of fancy and fiction. The real truth is, that this passion, with all its arbitrary power, is not always invincible, especially by great characters; to represent it otherwise is not only injurious but disheartening to human reason. The statuary, who exhibited the man overcoming the lion, if he even granted more to invention than to matter of fact, furnished at least to mankind an encouragement to try for the victory, which may sometimes be gained with presuming, but never by an abject despair of it.

Hitherto, my Lord, you have a clear right to treat this incident as nothing

more than one of the surprises of a passion, which seems to delight in taking captives, none more than the greatest men, when they are not enough on their guard: but that captivity needs not be lasting; a noble exertion of manly resolution will easily, and with a good grace, free you from chains, injurious to reason and to honor.

I say nothing to you of the reparation to Lady Harriet by your just return to her, nor of the respect you might think due to the memory of a tender mother, who so passionately wished this match into which she engaged you; I lay even no stress on the regard you owe to yourself, to your plighted honor, and especially to the happiness of a young Lady to whom a desertion would be so cruel an indignity, because I am but too sensible that love is not to be commanded by
any

any respects, and flies with disdain from every thing that has an air of tie, or constraint. Liberty is its very essence; it will sometimes, indeed, endure to be expelled, by the powers of reason and virtue, but never to be compelled into possession. This point, then, is too tender, too delicate, too much dependent on yourself, for me to presume or wish to touch upon it. Whatever resolution you may take, be the merit of it all your own. You have in your own breast the most authoritative of all monitors. Consult that sacred oracle, your heart.

I am, my Lord, &c.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE.

D 6 LET.



LETTER XXIX.

*The Marquess of SOBERTON to LAUN-
CELOT GREVILLE, Esq;*

Petersham.

My ever honored Friend,

I Would not suffer you to remain a moment longer than I could help it, under any uncertainty as to my resolution and procedure, in consequence of my disastrous passion, and shall, therefore in this letter confine myself to that object alone, leaving all other matters to future notice.

After that I had received Clara's letter, I waited near three days before I could well determine what to do. At length,

length, urged by the violence of my sentiments, I could think of nothing better than to try to obtain one more audience from Clara, in which I proposed to exert my utmost efforts of argument and persuasion to induce her to accept my offer: as little of hope, then, as the design of this step presented, I took it nevertheless.

I went to Mrs. Buckley's, who, I found, was only denied; but as to Clara, she had absolutely, the day after she had sent me her answer, removed from Mrs. Buckley's, without leaving any direction or trace to where she was gone. Mrs. Buckley, I might very well suppose, knew; but it was not through her, I could hope any information. Without ever having come to any explanation in form, I was perfectly clear as to the unfavorableness of her sentiments to my desires.

In

62 *The Marquess of SOBERTON*

In the perplexity of spirit, caused to me by this news of Clara's removal, I immediately, though not without confusion, not without reluctance, drove to Lady Harriet's in town, where I wished, and yet dreaded, to have my doubts cleared up, as to the disappearing of Clara in that manner, and at that juncture. Lady Harriet did not receive me with her usual cheerfulness, which, in the natural consciousness of guilt, I instantly ascribed to some intimation, I will not say directly from Clara, for I did her discretion and honor too much justice to suspect her of any ill office of that kind, but from some quarter or other, of what had passed against the regard I owed to Lady Harriet.

I was mistaken. Nothing of that nature had transpired, so as to come to her knowledge. The little cloud I found on her countenance, and which

was

was presently dissipated, proceeded from nothing but her sensibility to a short note, which she had just before received from Clara, containing nothing more than a tender and succinct excuse for declining to take leave in form, for a journey into the country, which a sudden emergency required, and which she did not specify. Nor did Lady Harriet's imagination lead her to any conjecture, but that of some family-concern, which might render Clara's presence necessary, or at least important, so that she laid no farther stress on it.

It was not so with me; for I could plainly, and with great self-reproach, discern, that Clara had had recourse to this step, not out of any fear of me, for with one of my character that was quite out of the question; nor even out of any apprehension of my visits or assiduities being more frequent to her than
she

she could have wished, for her own quiet, or Lady Harriet's, as she could not but be sensible, that one single express prohibition of them would have rid her of such importunity; but purely out of her candor and good-nature to deliver me, by that decisiveness of conduct, from the cruelty of incertainty, as it is the mixture of hope with desire that creates and continues the torture. Possibly too she might, in her spirit of friendship, think she was leaving, by her absence, the fairer field for the justice of Lady Harriet's reclainer.

But whatever were her motives, and I am very sure, that to know her, and not ascribe to her the most virtuous and the most laudable ones, would be the height of injustice, my vexation, my sorrow for my having disturbed her peace and thus driven her out of her proposed course, made it very difficult to reconcile myself to myself.

And

And here, my dear friend, do not let me make a parade to you of a false virtue; truth is to me above every thing: for suffer it or not honor, admit it or not duty, murmur or not my heart, I must say, that if I had seen the least glimpse of an overture of succeeding with the invincible Clara, I should have sacrificed every consideration to my passion for her. I could sooner have parted with my life than with any the least shadow of a hope of obtaining, in the possession of her, the supreme end of all my wishes, of all my desires. I had already actually given up more than my life, my honor, in the proposals I had made to her, and which, for that very reason, were, to my shame I confess it, unworthy of so pure, so celestial a character: my passion, in short, burnt too fiercely to be extinguished by any thing but utter despair, and I presume, there is no passion, except in idiots, that can survive hope. It
is

66 *The Marquess of SOBERTON*

is in that light that it may, without a paradox, be said, that what redoubled my esteem for Clara, lessened my love, by placing her at a height so much above my reach, that not to have given over the pursuit was only tempting the renewal of the fable of the embraced clouds. It is not, then, to me that the honors of the triumph are due, but to Clara. I have not to boast of a passion vanquished by my own reason, but by her virtue and my despair.

All these thoughts did not instantly occur to me during my stay with Lady Harriet, which my vexation obliged me to make as short as it well could: but in the first moments of solitude, I came to a clear explanation with myself, on the nature of my situation. Clara's cool and resolute procedure, combined with my perfect conviction of her superiority to all suspicion of coquetry or art,

art, had satisfied me of what I had not to expect from her. I had, then, a barbed arrow to pluck forth from my breast, which I was sure would tear my vitals in the attempt. Do not let me, my worthy friend, give your sensibility the pain of a minute description of the pangs it cost me, of the tortures I endured, before I could, in the agonies of my despair, pronounce to my desires, their sentence of death. They were criminal, myself their Judge, though too much their accomplice not to deserve to suffer, as I actually did, little short of death with them.

Behold me, then, restored to freedom! but purchased at how dear a rate! I shudder yet to think of it! still there was another piece of justice remaining for me to execute. A reparation to Lady Harriet, only the more her right, for her not so much as suspecting that I
owed

owed it to her. Nothing is more true than that in the midst of all my rage of passion for Clara, I had never once had the barbarity to impute to Lady Harriet as matter of complaint from me, whatever bar my situation with her might oppose to my success with Clara. Nor do I by this mean, with a coxcomb's presumption, that that bar was the only one, for I have no sort of reason to think I had made any sort of impression on Clara's heart. However, I was so far from looking on Lady Harriet with an evil eye on the account of her being an impediment to my designs, that I was constantly in my inward sentiments for her proving to myself, that though there may be no loving more than one at once, there is a greater latitude for esteem, as mine was, I am sure, fairly divided between herself and Clara. It was, indeed, precisely on that solid and unalterable foundation of esteem, that it became

became the easier for me to resume, even with greater force, that tender regard for Lady Harriet, which I had once taken for love, and which perhaps was love, though not in so violent a degree of ardor as that with which Clara had inspired me. The sentiments I had had for Lady Harriet, had more of the nature of a lambent harmless flame; but my passion for Clara, more the character of a fierce fire, that had burnt reason, duty, and even honor itself out of doors.

On this occasion, then, I have called myself to a strict account; and believe me, my dear friend, could I, on the strictest scrutiny into the deepest recesses of my heart, have found lurking at the bottom of it, so mean, so selfish a view as that of filling the uncomfortable void left in it, by my failure of success with Clara, with a resumption of my
addresses

addresses to Lady Harriet, I honor, I esteem, and I hope I may now say, I love her too much to make of her nothing more than a reserve, or resource, in the case of another's refusal. Instead of the indignity to her of such a motive of procedure in me, my whole thoughts, my whole soul are intent on nothing so much as on intitling myself to her forgiveness of that involuntary crime, by the sincerity and innocence of of my future conduct. There may be characters infernal enough to hate where they offend ; but to me the injuries, secret or not, which I had done to Lady Harriet, are to me but an indearment of her the more. Before, I had only simply an engagement to fulfill, I have now a breach of it to repair. Besides, let me not dissemble with myself or you, it is not easy to conceive how much Lady Harriet has gained of advantage in my opinion, and even of loveliness in my eyes,

eyes, by the consideration of that friendship with which she could inspire so admirable a judge of worth as Clara. There must be in her own character something extremely engaging and attractive to live with her, as, indeed, I always judged from what I myself could discern of her; but Clara's choice is to me a powerful confirmation.

I shall also have gained by that failure, which I own it was no merit of mine, that it was not entirely consummated, a benefit, which is not a little one, that of an experience of my weakness, which will for ever henceforward keep me in a salutary diffidence of myself, and on a thorough guard against another surprise of this kind, which, by the by, I have not greatly to fear. There are not many Claras in the world.

I am, however, sensible, that in thus returning under the banners, which I

70 *The Marquess of* SOBERTON

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to L. GREVILLE, Esq; 71

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I am, however, sensible, that in thus returning under the banners, which I

had rather traiterously deserted, I sin against all the laws of romance; according to which, though inconstancy is not approved, the best reparation for it, that of returning to the first attachment, is as little the practice; but leaving that pleasant statute of the Love-code to its proper authority in the imaginary spaces of fiction and chimæra, I am not in the least afraid of submitting this recovery of my false step, to the decisions of Reason and even of Love. The restitution of a lost heart to its right owner is the only atonement I can now make, and I am but too happy, and more so, I am sure, than I deserve, in that act of justice being as yet in my power.

In this spirit it is, then, that I propose immediately to set about hastening the accomplishment of my engagement to Lady Harriet. I know, that her family passionately wishes it, and I would
fain

fain flatter myself that the pressing it will not be intirely disagreeable to herself. The more reason I have to think so, I feel myself the more guilty, and the more obliged, in honor, to devote the rest of my life to the making her's happy, and on that happiness to build my own.

But then that angel Clara! nay, do not be alarmed, I cannot, it is true, mention her name without emotion, but it is most certainly not the emotion of love. It is rather with such a rapture of zeal mixed with awe, as one would speak of a super-human being. She is gone. But where? That I shall soon, I hope, learn, for my purpose of fair amends to her for any disturbance I have given to her. Wherever she goes, my constant good wishes, joined with the purest intentions for her service, shall pursue her. My love has yielded its place to an eternal friendship: I look on

her family as mine: it shall have as much the benefit of my will to have been honorably united to it, as it would have had of the deed itself.

I had naturally, you may be sure, made some enquiries about her relations: nothing could be more favorable to my views: you have already been apprised of Mrs. Buckley's transcendent worth: Her nephew, Mr. Mellefont, married to Clara's elder sister, is a Clergyman of an excellent character; in short, one would imagine, that merit ran in a rich vein through the whole family, like the ore-streak in a mine. Most luckily it is, just at this juncture, in my power to give Mr. Mellefont, who, I am told, has a growing family, a demonstration of my good will to all who are related to Clara. The Duke has given me the presentation, at my disposal, of the living of Welborough: it brings in

to L. GREVILLE, *Esq*; 75

in near seven hundred a year, which, even every other consideration a-part, I do not find that I could bestow better than on so worthy a man. Nor is this all; so far as my influence shall ever extend, I will have my eye on him, for any preferment or for any advantages it will be possible for me to procure to him and to his. These overtures of service, actual and intended, I shall, through Mrs. Buckley, render, I hope, acceptable to him, both in the propriety of the manner, and in the purity of its motive.

As to Clara herself, my marks of friendship shall be as boundless as my esteem. With what I know of Lady Harriet's generosity, and especially of her dispositions towards her, I have not the least doubt of her being even thankful to me, for the proposal of her making, in the form of a wedding favor, a present to

76. *The Marquess of SOBERTON*

Clara of her jewels, as those of the Dutchess will be full sufficient for herself. These Clara's delicacy will engage her to receive with less repugnance from Lady Harriet, than from me; who do not, however, mean that they shall acquit me to her. I shall, of myself, join to them the gift of that neat snug-box of mine in Surry, with the grounds round it, which may be about two hundred and forty pounds a year: but of this donation, I must also intreat Mrs. Buckley to undertake the making the acceptance agreeable to Clara, in its true light of an homage paid by the purest friendship to the most perfect worth. It would be hard, indeed, if vice engrossed so exclusively all rewards as not to leave any for virtue.

Mean while, I have not any fear of your imputing this account I am giving you of my intentions, to any vain ostentation

to L. GREVILLE, *Esq*; 77

tation or parade : you will easily see my drift in it is to recover what of your esteem I may have justly forfeited by my weakness, and to make you some amends for the pain that weakness was but the more likely to give you, for your having laid the foundations of a stronger constitution of mind than what such a terrible falling-off has betrayed. Remember, I can never be reconciled to myself, till I have your approbation for my sanction.

Yours, &c.

SOBERTON.

E 3 L E T

yourself; you have rescued your honor
out of jeopardy, and turned your de-



for your rescuing your claim to it.

LETTER XXX.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE, *Esq;* to the
Marquess of SOBERTON.

at —, Gloucestershire.

My Lord-Marquess,

YOU have recovered your fall with
such a superiority of spirit, that
it is a question whether you could have
stood fast with more dignity. It is with-
out any compliment, which you know
me incapable of using with you, or
indeed with any one, that I may ven-
ture to assure you, that you have given
to that untoward accident of a passion,
only unjustifiable by your situation of a
prior engagement, an issue worthy of
yourself;

yourself; you have rescued your honor out of jeopardy, and turned your defeat to a triumph; only the more a triumph for your renouncing your claim to it.

Your dispositions towards Clara and her family are truly noble, and strongly prove to me your complete victory over any little acrimony natural to be felt on the disappointment of desires so ardent as yours; they prove you recovered, without any danger of a relapse.

But especially let me congratulate you on your return to your engagement with Lady Harriet, who so much deserves your love, and who has given so many proofs of her sincere affection for you. What offers did she not refuse, on your account, even before matters were so much advanced as they have been since? Graced, as she is, with all the advantages of blooming youth, of beauty, of fortune,

80 L. GREVILLE, *Esq; &c.*

tune, of education, and especially of excellent sense and character, I do not hazard much in bespeaking for you the most exalted happiness, in the form of the most indispensable duty; that of keeping faith with that amiable and accomplished Lady.

It is with that auspicious presage that I conclude, and am

Yours, &c.

LAUNCELOT GREVILLE.



LETTER XXXI.

Mrs BUCKLEY to Mr. MELLEFONT.

London.

Dear Nephew,

PREPARE soon to receive your fair fugitive sister. But for what a fugitive? For Love? No. Guess again. For Honor? Now you come nearer the matter. But let me explain myself, after which I shall deliver the pen to Clara, who is, at this moment, with me, in Lady Proffer's closet, in the city, dated from which you receive this letter. Leave her, then, while I am writing to you a whole Iliad, to amuse herself with reading the last new play. But where is Lady Proffer? Patience, and I will

tell you. She is at this instant as busy as you can imagine, in preparations for her journey into the country, a month, at least, sooner than she originally proposed, for the sake of Clara's company, who is in a hurry to leave town, and to go down to you, for a reason which will come in course.

No sooner had she received the Marquess of Soberton's declaration, which, as I wrote you before, I had long, not without reason, anticipated, and which, I assure you, gave her infinite pain, on Lady Harriet's account, than merely from the dictates of her own heart, she sent him, in the politest terms, the most peremptory denial: after which she had the impudence to ask me if I approved her conduct, as if it was possible not to worship her for it. To confess the truth, I had done her, for some time, the injustice to be in pain for her, while I saw her,

her, with so much facility and unreserve, deliver herself up to the danger of Lord Soberton's distinctions and assiduities, whose great and undoubted merit made me tremble for her, and, indeed, for himself. I knew him, irrevocably engaged in honor to Lady Harriet, or but for that invincible bar there is not, as I conceive, in Europe, that match I should have been better pleased with than between Clara and him. He is, to do him no more than justice, a most worthy, a most amiable character, independent of his title and fortune, which I am very clear are, in her delicacy of thinking, less a temptation than an objection: matter rather of apology than of boast to her. The worst that can be said of him, is, that, on this occasion, a passion for an object the likeliest in the world to create and even to justify a violent one, be this said without the least partiality to Clara, hurried him beyond the bounds

of duty, and compelled him to take a step, in which, he was too worthy, too respectable a character, in short, not to deserve the happiness he met with, of being refused where it would have been death, both to his honor and to her's, to have been accepted. As it has happened, it was reserved for Clara's magnanimity not only to save him from himself, but to give him withall the consolation of finding, that since he was to fall into such an error, it was somewhat mitigated by the dignity of a choice that was to preserve him from its being irreparable: one involuntary error, in short, compensated by a thousand virtues.

It was then on a strong presumption of the Marquess's probity, that Clara, founding a hope of what I am persuaded she sincerely wishes, his return to Lady Harriet, started, of herself, the idea of confirming, by her immediate absence,
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the decisiveness of her answer. But to this she added a reason, which I confess would never have come into my head, and which yet is not absolutely without its weight. Of the two cases she concluded one must be the consequence, that the Marquis would not resume his engagement to Lady Harriet, or, that he would; but that in either supposition, it was clearly right for her to quit the scene; on which, if she staid, on his continuing his injustice to Lady Harriet, suspicions might arise of her designedly hovering and playing a stale game of duplicity, or of attraction by repulses. On the other hand, if, as she rather hoped, wished, and believed, he should come to that conclusion, to which he was bound by every tie of honor and of duty, Lady Harriet would infallibly give her an invitation, which she could not easily elude by any other excuse than that of a great distance, to assist at her nuptials, a ceremony

remony, which, for any objection she had to them, she could see with no sentiment but that of a sincere joy, on her friend's account; but then she imagined, that after what had passed between Lord Soberton and her, there might appear in her being present at them, a kind of air of bravade to him, which was an insult neither in her nature, nor indeed deserved from her by his Lordship.

To this resolution then of Clara's, I concurred, with no repugnance, but that of parting from so sweet a companion; especially too, as I was sensible that her original intention was to go down to you, in the course of the summer. But as this removal was, by the circumstance, required, for obvious reasons, to be immediate, I thought she could not do better than to accept Lady Proffer's pressing invitation to stay a few days with her in the city, where she might pass as
much

much for being gone into the country, as if she was a hundred miles off, and where she might, in the mean while, make her dispositions for effectively setting out on the journey. But Lady Proffer was no sooner acquainted of this intention of her's, to proceed for Lancashire, than, ever ready to seize an occasion of service, she proposed to take her down with her herself, and deliver her to you, as safe and as well conditioned, as she terms it, as she received her from you. Nothing could be more agreeable to Clara, who has a great aversion for travelling alone; so that you may very soon expect to have her with you, and in her one of the greatest ornaments of human kind. I think, too, I dare answer for you, that you will at once approve and admire the sacrifice she has made to honor and to friendship; content to quit a scene of numberless conquests, among whom there
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are certainly persons of great worth, but who have not had the secret to touch her heart, and to seek, in your rural recess, a refuge from all the pomp and glare of a world, in which she has so many universally received pretensions to make a most distinguished figure. But I repeat what I have before mentioned to you; I never saw one of her age, I think, scarce seventeen, with so determinate a turn for purely domestic life, which is surely the greatest qualification for that connubial one, to which, however, she appears to have so little disposition. Nor can she re-appear among you, under the disgrace of a neglected beauty, since she has evidently refused some of the first matches of the kingdom, and most of them from that principle of honor which is her unerring guide, that of disdaining, on any prospect of fortune or ambition, or, indeed, on any consideration whatever, to give her

her hand without her heart. A prophanation of which whoever is voluntarily guilty, not only forecloses all equity of redemption from one of the worst kinds of hell on earth, to which she will have condemned herself, but forfeits all right of repining at those horrors of her fate, which can hard fail of being the punishment of her folly, of her meanness, and, indeed, of the baseness of her perjured injustice to the man she marries, to whom she solemnly vows a love she has not, nor is probably in her power ever to have. For surely any appearance of fondness afterwards must arise from a motive too gross to be mistaken for love. On the other hand, what execration is not due to those tyrannical parents, who, sacrificing Nature to Fortune, inflict a punishment worse than death itself, on children instinctively of a taste too just to see the same charms as they do in money or titles! If such parents
were

were but to consider the torments to which they expose a tender amiable child, by throwing her into the arms of some disagreeable wretch, whom not to detest would be a want of common sense; if they would but fairly weigh a loathsome horror against the dispatch of a moment's mortal pain, they would own that the sacrifices of infants to Moloch, in the vale of Hinnon, were tender mercies compared to the sufferings to which they doom their innocent children; by making victims of them to Mammon. While, to render the cruelty the more completely bitter, they insult them with the pretence of its being all for their happiness, though they are all the while consulting nothing but their own interest or their own vanity. I do not here lay any stress on the temptations, to the falling under which they expose their children, because I am sensible that those slaves of the dirty, selfish passions, never

never have delicacy enough to take that consideration, all natural as it is, into the account : indifferent alike to the misery and to the guilt of their unhappy offspring, so they but humor their own eternally false and despicable ideas, which unfortunately the world itself is too apt to countenance, in the abandoned turn it has taken to an avarice, which estimates every thing, even happiness itself, not by the constitutives of personal merit, but by something more current at market, articles of fortune.

But what an unnatural shocking sight must it be, that of a blooming beauty, allied either with the infirmities of decrepitude, or, with what is perhaps as great a source of disgust, with an ill temper or diseases at any age, and especially in youth, because there more extraordinary ! Is it for parents to exact such sacrifices from their children ?

Let

Let me give you here an example, which you will hardly think digressively introduced. You have not, perhaps, forgot a sweet little girl, then a child when you took notice of her, about eight years ago, Lucy Harwood, the only daughter of the goldsmith who lived the next door to us: she was, since that time, grown strikingly finely, with all the glowing freshness of youth, and all the points of female beauty, graced, above every thing, with the most engaging modesty. Happening to be one day at some public place, I do not well remember which, where she attracted a general admiration, she had no better luck than to make a conquest of one Mudly; a fellow, originally a follower of his father, a cryer of old cloaths, for whom he carried his bag, till by some accident he got to be runner to a public office, and there made his way, by no other merit on earth but that of an implicit

plicit slave that would run any risques for those in power to advance him, and would set his hand and face to any job or drudgery, the fouler the more welcome to him. With this noble disposition he could hardly fail of succeeding, and he accordingly made a considerable fortune, originally, by the relaxation of management, and indolent connivence of authority at the waste and malversations in offices; but this fortune he swelled immoderately, by occasional hits in the stock-jobbing way, and loans to the government, out of the very money of which he had cheated it; loans on occasions perfectly unnecessary, if counsels less courtly and more national had prevailed. After, then, spending the greatest part of his life in enriching himself by schemes against the public welfare, he began to lay out for pleasing himself, by a project against private happiness. Sensually, then, affected by the
fight

sight of Lucy, he soon got himself introduced to her parents, and without giving himself any the least trouble about the girl's inclinations, but with all the cocksure insolence of the purse-proud adept of a plum, he proposed his right honorable intentions. The parents, dazzled with the opulence of this son of Rag-fair, thought they could do nothing better for her happiness than to bury her alive in the arms of that detestable lump of mortality. But to give you a juster idea of the *happiness* they proposed for their child, suffer me to furnish you with a description of his person, as I am apt to think you never saw him.

Figure to yourself a little thick squab animal, not much above four feet high, with a prominent belly, which, with the shortness of the inferior part of his body, might give you the idea of a toad set on his hind legs, especially if you take into
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the picture a broad, bloated, tawney face, with a wide mouth that had the air of meaning to go round his head, if it had not been luckily stopped by his ears, in revenge of which it looked as if it would bite a piece out of them, every time that in speaking he made a contortion with it. Add to this a flat nose, blubber-lips, eyes goggling like those of a strangled cat, and a greasy unctuous perspiration for ever on the surface of his phyz, somewhat like the sweating of a vault in summer; and, with all this, your imagination can never reach half the horrors of his appearance: be this said without any the least caricature.

The charms of his mind were also answerable to those of his pretty person, which, in all the simplicity of good faith, he took for the perfect model of manly beauty. Nor will you think this strange, when I tell you, that, take him out of
his

his rote of official bustle, and the jargon of Change-alley, he had not an idea beyond that money-grubbing sphere, and was scarce not a born idiot, with a head as contracted as his heart, and nothing could be more so. Accustomed to fawn and crouch to those superiors from whom he had any thing to hope or fear, he indemnified himself for that constraint by the utmost harshness and haughtiness to those whom occasions, or their disastrous fortune, had made any way dependent on him. It was then that he would give a full loose to all the insolence of his native meanness. And yet, with this very wretch I have seen some of our first nobility, cheek-by-jowl, treating him with the utmost familiarity, flapping him on the shoulder, and calling him *honest* Tom Mudly! It is true they had borrowed money of him in some of those rare moments that his vanity had played his avarice, the trick of rendering him
less

less scrupulous than usual about security.

To a girl possessed of these invaluable treasures of Nature, the graces of youth, beauty, and innocence, and that girl too his own daughter, this was the pretious rich object Mr. Harwood presented; an object rather less presentable than a Negroe dying of the yaws: for with his death there would be mixed an idea of delivery from him, whereas the disproportion of this poisonous monster's age was not, after all, quite so great, as not to threaten such a duration of torture, as was likely to make an end of her first. At the bare sight of him, however, introduced on that footing, Lucy shuddered, and recoiled with horror and affright, which he very currently attributed either to her maiden modesty, or to the overwhelming effect of his delightful person, or to both combined. But he did not

long remain under that deception; she presently let him know her sentiments of detestation of him, with all the ingenuous candor of an age incapable of dissimulation. In vain had he the mean delicacy of seeking the satisfaction of his passion, which her refusal had only the more inflamed, from the arbitrary will of her parents, who so far complied with his request, that, after remonstrating to her the duty of unlimited passive obedience, after representing to her what she would lose by her obstinacy, equipage, jewels, side-board of plate, fine cloaths, every thing, in short, of which the possession at best tires or grows indifferent after a few days, but which with such a condition annexed to it, as that of subjection to such a monster, would become even matter of execration: they concluded, on her non-compliance, with the threat of turning her out of doors, and abandoning her to the wide world. And they were as good as
their

their word: for Lucy, protected by an instinct of Nature infinitely wiser than their instigation of false opinion, ventured, for the first time in her life, to have a will that was not theirs, and persisted in rejecting him. The unalterable tenor of her objection to their pressure was plain and unanswerable. “I do not love him;” “and if I do not love him, I ought not” “to marry him; and this is a duty, to” “the breach of which no parents ought” “to compell or wish to seduce me.”

This was her text, and she stuck unmoveably to it. Nor was this in her any spirit of disobedience to them, but merely an invincible aversion against a man fit to inspire nothing else. Neither had they the common resource of impugning this refractoriness in her to any pre-engagement of heart contrary to her duty. She did not need that circumstance to fortify her abhorrence of so shocking an object.

Both father and mother, then, enraged at her wilfully missing such a heavenly bargain, literally speaking turned her into the street, where she must have absolutely fallen upon the chance of Public Charity, or, worse yet, upon the chance of private vice, if she had not been taken in by a distant relation, who, neglected by the family for her poverty, had been occasionally relieved, in secret, by Lucy's natural goodness of heart. With her then she was fortunate enough to find a temporary refuge. I was then in Cornwall, or she should not have failed of receiving assistance from me. The gratefull good woman, not content with only harbouring her, procured her means of subsistence by the honest industry of an employ of her talents in embroidery, millinery, and other articles of female work. Nor was it long before she was taken notice of, and courted, by a sober young tradesman, of very good morals, that had

had just succeeded his father, with a competent stock, in a flourishing way of business, who married her, and to whom she makes a most virtuous, discreet, and happy wife. It was, however, some time before her tender parents would be reconciled to her; and that being the only point wanting to her satisfaction, I had the pleasure at length of succeeding, in bringing about the restoration of her to their good graces, more for her sake, you may be sure, than theirs.

Mean while, what do you think was the opinion of the world in general? To its eternal shame, a condemnation of Lucy's conduct; not for disobedience to her parents: no; but for her having stood in her own light, as they vulgarly called it, in not prostituting herself for life, (and surely a marriage merely for interest deserves no softer name,) and that to a hardly human creature.

I have been glad to particularise this example to you, of the false and fordid judgment of the generality of mankind, in points of interest flighted or trampled upon, because I know that Clara has not escaped blame for the many great matches she has refused, not indeed with such violent reasons as Lucy's, but surely with full valid ones, in the eyes of nature and of honor, even, if she had had no other plea to offer but her want of sufficient liking.

I was in a fine writative vein for tiring you to death, but here comes Clara, with impatience in her eyes, to relieve you, me, and herself. (*To Clara.*)
 “What ails the girl? Why do not you
 “take the pen?”

[*Clara sits down, reads what Mrs. Buckley has written, and continues the letter, addressing herself to Mrs. Mellefont.*]

Dear

Dear Sister,

IT is very happy for me I am escaping from Mrs. Buckley, who would certainly spoil me, if I was to stay much longer with her, she is so terribly partial to me. I adopt, however, in its whole force, her plea for me, where she has left off, of a want of liking being a sufficient cause to forbid the bans of matrimony: I adopt it too the more readily, for its reducing the whole of that great magnanimity, which she does me the honor of attributing to me, to my only not being jade enough to take the advantage of a transient weakness of a very worthy man, to essentially injure him, to betray a friend, and to dishonor myself; and all this without any temptation; for I never considered as a temptation any views of fortune or ambition; and then as to any liking, that was absolutely out of the question; so that having had nothing to sa-

crifice to my duty, I own, I think it is even injurious to me, to allow me any mighty merit for my procedure, as if it had been just or natural to expect any other from any one that was not totally unprincipled.

As for fortune, I neither meanly wish it, nor give myself the air of false heroics to despise it: nay, for many obvious reasons, but especially for the good it enables one to do, I rather hold it a desirable object; only I think it may, like gold, be bought too dear, at the expence either of honor, or of those points of happiness which it is eternally out of its power to give, or to supply their place, though it may and often does destroy them. Content with my humble mediocrity, and having enough, what miss can I feel of the more that I do not want? With my taste for retirement and simplicity of life, in every thing, any superfluity,

ity, as to myself, would rather perplex than please me: I might, indeed, wish greater circumstances, for the sake of my friends; but, thank Heaven, I have none that are in want, or that would not be sorry to profit by any advantages to me that were incompatible with my happiness: I might wish a more affluent fortune for the sake of relieving the poor or distressed, but that duty never exacting more than a proportion to one's actual abilities, does not require improper sacrifices to interest; and surely no sacrifice could be more improper, than that of a duty so inviolable as of never marrying till the heart can join with the mouth, in pronouncing the sacramental word of Love, not as mere matter of ceremony, but as a solemn truth.

As to ambition, for example, of a title; it is not barely matter of indifference to me, for it is without any the least

affectation I can aver, that I have rather a strong prejudice against that distinction, especially as, in my small sphere of observation, it has appeared to me to be generally, I do not say necessarily, an unfavorable one. To persons of real merit it adds no sort of lustre; while to the worthless, it seems rather to throw a light on them, that directs the pointed finger of scorn to its mark; as surely where a title is unfilled, (and how few of them are not so?) the strongest contempt is even a duty. In short, I am almost tempted to subscribe, without reserve, to Mr. Mellefont's opinion, "That titles
 "are remains of Gothicism, antiquated
 "forms of appellation, the sound of
 "which having long survived the sense,
 "remain in vulgar use, without founda-
 "tion, or meaning, and merely by the
 "force of prescription. In short, as ti-
 "tles now stand, and considering the
 "persons on whom they are com-
 "monly

“monly pinned, they appear absurdities,
“to which custom is so far from recon-
“ciling one, that it is only a provoca-
“tion the more to disgust and derision.”

I confess, too, that I have been a good deal confirmed in these ideas by the company of that rank I saw while I staid at Lady Lovell's, who did not, however, receive worse characters than the common run of people of quality, and whose rote of life seemed to me one continued scene of wretched trifling. It even hurt me to see them reduced to such poor shifts for disposing of their worthless leisure, when, by choice, taking refuge from the sad irksomeness of not knowing what to do with themselves, in parties at cards, which one would imagine rather enjoined for a penance, than a recourse for amusement, being neither commendable for mirth, nor for exercise of body or of mind. It is, in truth, and

without any the least caricature, hardly possible to conceive any thing more trivial, more insipid, or more numbingly stupid than their assembly-nights, when every card-table appears an altar erected to Idleness and Dullness, at which the celebration of the service is at once worthy of the Divinities, and of such votaries as are capable of sacrificing time and taste to them. Lady Harriet used to call those ridiculous routs the States-general of Nonsense, and the person who gave the entertainment, their Stadtholder for the Night.

Motives, then, of fortune and ambition being quite out of the question of my non-acceptance of Lord Soberton's offers, there remains only for me to state my want of liking, which, rendering it no self-denial, reduces to nothing any pretention to merit from it, and leaves it in the rank of ordinary procedure. For
nothing

nothing is more certain, than that he had not inspired me with any the least inclination to enter into a partnership of his wrong. Not that he wanted merit. I know no man on earth that has more, or with whose friendship I should think myself more honored ; but having never viewed him in any light but that of a man equivalent to married to my intimate friend, he had never cost my heart the question how it stood affected to him, in the point of a more tender sentiment.

I shall then, dear sister, be with you soon, and carry down a heart as clear and as free as I brought it to town, and as it is my sincere wish to preserve it, without airs, without affectation, without prudery. This my wish is the produce of my fear. I am but too sensible of the nature of the passions not to dread their violence, and not to put my heart, of the weakness of which I am but too just-
ly

110 CLARA MAYNWARING, &c.

ly diffident, as much as possible on its guard against those enemies to its tranquillity and content.

Here I should, of my real grief and concern for parting from the worthy Mrs. Buckley, whom I love and honor beyond expression, say more, but that she is to read this letter before I close it. As to yourself, and Mr. Mellefont, I flatter myself I am arrived with you to the pitch of not needing professions or formularies of compliment.

Yours, &c.

CLARA MAYNWARING.

LET-

To Mrs. BUCKLEY. III



LETTER XXXII.

From Mr. MELLEFONT to Mrs.
BUCKLEY.

Lancashire.

AS your last letter, dear aunt, included an acknowledgment of the packet having come to your hand, which contained, together with the advice of Clara's safe arrival, our joint retribution of the most grateful thanks for all your kindnesses and favors to her, I should not, perhaps, have troubled you so soon afterwards, but for the indispensable duty of my considering every request of your's as a command. That indeed of my acquainting you of any incident materially relative to Clara, carries

carries with it so great a pleasure, that it robs me of any merit of obedience.

Something then having happened, in which Clara seems more deeply interested than probably even she herself suspects, I seize the occasion of giving you an account of it, but am obliged to introduce it with some preliminary lights.

About three or four months ago, Mr. Sumners, an Officer, who had been put on the half-pay on the close of the last war, came into this part of the country, and took a neat snug lodging at a Farmer's, scarce a mile and a half distant from my house. At that time I had not any the least acquaintance with him, and, indeed, he was little, if at all, known to any of the neighbourhood; a circumstance which had been one of his principal motives for the choice of this recess, where he proposed to wait the return of a son, who was absent in Holland,

land, on some business. His turn for solitude, independently of his having long seen the world with eyes rather of dislike than of only indifference, was also, in part, owing to a languishing state of health, from the wounds he had received at the battle of Quebec, and of which he had never been well recovered.

He had not been there long, before he was exposed to the indignity of a distress by the failure of a remittance of his pay, through the infidelity of a Cashier to Mr. Stanley, a very worthy Hamborough Merchant, and constant friend of his, to whom Mr. Sumners had entrusted that concern, and in whose compting-house, Mr. Sumners, his son, had been indulged admittance, there to take a tincture of Merchant's accompts, and of commercial notions; in which situation he had contracted a strict friendship with his son, who, it seems, went lately

lately to Hamborough, on some affairs relative to trade. It was, then, on this failure, that, for a debt far from considerable, incurred by the purchase of a horse and chaise, this worthy Gentleman was arrested, when in a country where he was an intire stranger, he was, for want of immediate bail, or at least of such bail as he himself did not chuse to incur an obligation by accepting, carried to a common jail; upon which he wrote immediately a tender expostulation to Mr. Stanley, who had not till just that instant discovered his Cashier's imbezzlements. On receipt of this letter, Mr. Stanley was not content with immediately sending down express the requisite relief, with ample reparation of damages, but came down in person to make an apology, and satisfy Mr. Summers of his innocence; nor would he be persuaded of his forgiveness, till he had consented to an arrangement, that should
thence-

thence-forward make such another accident, humanly speaking, an impossibility.

And here, dear aunt, on the occasion of my mentioning the treatment of Mr. Sumners, in his being so unnecessarily and yet not illegally thrown into prison, forgive me, in favor of humanity, a digressive reflexion on the impolitic cruelty of our laws, in authorising, under such little restriction, those burial-places of our fellow-creatures alive, incomparably oftener sacrificed to the cruel humor or to the revenge of merciless creditors, than to the calls of justice. I am ready to grant, that some debtors do not deserve a less punishment than common highway-men, their means of coming at the money of honest tradesmen, or of others, by fraud, or circumvention, being not a whit less detrimental, and much more odious, than by open violence; but if you would set against these villainous debtors those insidious

dious creditors, who have by design, by artifice, by taking the advantage of ignorance and inexperience, brought unfortunate objects under their clutches, by the letter of the law against its spirit, and I fancy you would find the account of fraudulent debtors, in contrast to unjust creditors, so nearly ballanced, as to afford no fair argument in favor of the least humane side; especially if it be considered, that it would be more eligible for ten of the guilty to escape, than for one innocent person to suffer. This would clearly reduce the state of the question to the point for which I would contend, that Debtors, generally speaking, (and it is from generals and not from exceptions that conclusions are to be drawn, or laws framed) cannot, in the eyes of humanity, and especially of justice, the glory of which is never to be at variance with humanity, for whose sake it came into existence, deserve of all

all deaths the most horrid and the most torturous, that of perishing, as such numbers actually do, in the dreary dungeons of legal captivity, by a sickly languor more intolerable than the most acute pains, by atrophy, by inanition, and especially by affliction and despair.

But perhaps I exaggerate. The term "torturous" may appear over-strained, or declamatory. It can only appear so to those who either do not think at all, or are destitute of human feelings. Consult any physician of skill and ability, and I dare aver, that he will easily satisfy you, that the sufferings of the body, and the anguish of the mind, in the process of a confinement, under its generally concomitant circumstances of penury, cold, hunger, filth, want of free air and exercise, hardships of all kinds, and especially corrosive grief for the coolness or desertion of tired-out friends, with, in short,

short, all the train of those evils, from the very idea of which humanity shrinks with horror, altogether form a complication of torture, compared to which any other torture must appear light, especially if you set the duration of the one against the sharpness of the sharpest imaginable.

Dogs gnawing one's joints ; the having every limb broken with an iron bar, and the being afterwards coiled alive round a wheel, with the head hanging down ; the cutting open the bowels of a man and fastening them to a windlass, to be spun forth for the amusement of tender-hearted spectators ; or the Persian device of a punishment for some enormous criminal, by confining him to receive the falling of water slowly, drop by drop, on his bare head, close shaved, till, with the extremity of that exquisite torture, he raves, despairs, and dies, afford some
image,

image, though a faint inadequate one, of that slow but excruciating pain, not only of the body by various hardships, but worse than of the body, of the spirit, under which it is even a familiar event for so many poor close confined wretches to pine away, in their execrable immurement, in such a manner, that dashing their brains out against the prison-walls would comparatively be a tender mercy, or a death-warrant an act of clemency.

Certainly, certainly the deaths which are the most terrible to behold are not the most terrible to endure. That gloomy remorseless tirant Tiberius, who might have given lessons of cruelty to an Inquisitor-General, hugged himself for the idea of favoring his revenge in the making his prisoners die by inches, and feel their death, which, on its coming, at length, he envied them, as an escape from him.

And,

And, in fact, the worst kind of execution is the civil one, by a length of torments, which so often makes death be invoked, and sometimes desperately resorted to, as a deliverance. “I cannot, indeed,” (said a stony-hearted Arabian, and sighed,) “hang my debtor,” (but then he added, with a smile, on reflexion,) “I can do more, I can make him hang himself.” This is what the Psalmist so emphatically calls and curses, “*slaying the broken heart.*”

A pound of human flesh, cut out near the heart, would satisfy the gentle Jew of Venice ; but nothing less than the bleeding heart itself, and torn heart-strings, will glut the white-livered revenge and inveteracy of some Christian Shylocks, who prophane, with a palpable mockery, the Lord’s Prayer, by the daily repetition of what so solemnly condemns them. And yet, that it is but just for
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the Law to lend its hand to gratify this blessed humor is contended for by some of our Law-puritans, with all the rigor of the righteous over much, and with all the insensibility presumable of such as can loathsomely prey on the distresses of their fellow-creatures.

As the Law now stands, it would hang a creditor that should take upon him to murder his debtor in a compendious way; as if envying him the office of executioner, it chose to take it out of his hands, only to put the unfortunate debtor to a more lingering torturous death, by burying him alive in the receptacle it has provided for him to rot in by inches. And this in complaisance to a phantom usurping the name and form of Justice. For surely it is not the less true for its being proverbially trite, that a prison pays no debts. At least for one that it recovers, it cancels and de-

stroy a thousand. And yet the original intention of justice in providing such places of durance, was purely to compell the able and unwilling to pay, but never to punish unfortunate insolvents, or to make their inability more desperate by laying them under greater distress. A Lord Chancellor of England, at once a humane Judge and great Patriot, used to say, he could hardly conceive a debt so great that a year's close imprisonment ought not to satisfy; and yet so literally true is the saying, even in this sense, that a jail pays no debt, that no length of that horrid punishment is taken into the account of the discharge, or reckoned part of payment.

But how happy for creditors, in general, would it be, if the Law was, even for their greater prospect of relief and benefit, as tender of the liberty of the subject, as it affects to be of his property; if justice, in short, disdaining
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to humor, and especially to be the tool of their vindictiveness, would consult their interest more, and indulge their blind passions less! Between the creditor and his debtor, it is unquestionably the creditor that is entitled to the most favor. He is the party aggrieved. But is it any real favor to him, to abet his folly in increasing the inability of a debtor, or to minister to his cruelty in murdering him, after trusting him, perhaps, injudiciously, or with a view to make a property of him by extraordinary profits?

Can the White-wash, as it is in derision termed, of some even base and fraudulent wretches, not preventively enough guarded against by the Law, and sheltering themselves under an act intended for a general benefit, but, like all other human acts, liable to partial abuses and inconveniencies, be big with a blacker train of horrors, than the letting such multitudes

of those who are only unfortunate, daily perish in jail, and worse than needlessly perish, to the reproach of Justice and of Humanity? or can there be a more execrably false reason opposed to the putting an end to the tortures of the innocent, than its opening a door for the guilty to escape them; if any one can properly be called guilty enough to deserve worse than death itself?

I have begun with fairly granting, what I here repeat, that there are debtors, who, for the villainous nature of their premeditated frauds in contracting their debts, or for their baseness in eluding the payment of an honest worthy creditor, who is perhaps himself ruined, and liable to a jail, for their failure, deserve death equally, or rather more, than those who rob on the highway; and yet, I think, that the death by that lingering torture, to which some of those
victims

victims to their own villainy are so often brought, is rather too much. But be that as it may, to infer from their guilt any expedience of involving those clear of it in a parity of punishment, is at once to renounce justice, humanity, and common sense. To take it for granted that the Law cannot provide proper distinctions, is to suppose Justice too blind, too unfeeling, or too indolent to make them.

Unhappily the tricking debtor has too often a better bargain of a debt incurred by fraud and treachery, than the honest debtor betraid into his distress by mere misfortune, by error of judgment, or by silly thoughtlessness. The first being commonly better prepared than the other, and living on the creditor's substance as long as it will last; while the other starves on his innocence of so base a design: Sometimes the creditor will have laid the foundation of his right by law to his suit

of imprisonment, in having wronged, circumvented, or insnared him, in which case the villainous creditor is always the most unmerciful. How many objects, at this instant, of both sexes, are, for want of means to prove their innocence of the debts for which they are suffering their torments, perishing under them! But putting their case at the best; that they can at length make their wrongs and false imprisonment appear; what Jury can estimate their past groans, or the floods of tears their oppression will have cost their families? What sufficient damages can be given for the vexation of spirit or the agonies of grief? and yet this is a distress much more common than is imagined, or than the Law can redress.

But even among those, who, on their first entrance into those mansions of misery, before they will have consumed what had wrongfully escaped, their creditors,
and

and before their heart comes to be broken by a length of confinement, affect airs of bravade and unconcern; among even those, I say, it is easy to observe, that their festivity is loathsomely forced, and their convivial jollitry aukward and unnatural. You may plainly perceive in all their dismally acted mirth, to which they have recourse by way of stunning their sense of their condition, a funereal countenance, and the horror of a ghastly smile; a mirth, in short, to which the faint flame of false spirits gives a discolored snap-dragon hue, that makes them look as if they were celebrating their own funeral obsequies, or singing dirges at the burial-service of themselves in those graves for the quick, which may, sooner than they imagine, make them sigh for the graves of the dead.

Amidst, however, the consideration of all these absurd horrors, it was not with-

out some pleasure that my researches into the antiquities of Britain led me to the discovery, that this infernal process, by imprisoning human creatures in dungeons, for civil debts, was a practice unknown to those times of simplicity and humanity, to which the great bulwarks of liberty, the Trials by Juries, and other privileges of the common law, can be traced. This impolitic, senseless, barbarous custom, was, strictly speaking, imported into this island, together with its slavery, under imperial Rome, when her assimilative policy bred so great a change in the laws, manners, customs, and religion of the British natives. And yet I have great reason to think it was so little agreeable to their genius and spirit, that it was abolished on the Romans withdrawing their forces, though it came afterwards to be revived by subsequent alterations of the forms of Law, in imitation of those of the Continent.

But

But do not imagine from this, that the security of private credit was neglected by our more antient laws, before this baneful exotic plant of remorseless tyranny took ultimately root. The goods of the creditors were liable to seizure, but the human liberty was deemed too sacred to be alienable for debt. A man could no more engage his liberty than his life. Private property, inherited or acquired, was considered as belonging to the subject, and as such was transferable and seizable on private suit ; but the subjects themselves were held to belong absolutely to their country, and as such were solely at her disposal, according to her want of them, for the occupations of peace, or of war. Throwing them into prison was robbing the public hive. The country was held the preferable creditor.

But where there was any room to judge the debtor fraudulent, or contu-

macious, in the secreting or withholding lawful satisfaction with his goods ; he was not only, by a judicial process, rendered the object of public infamy and scorn, but driven out, by a civil excommunication, from society, and finally out-lawed. He was under a kind of interdiction of fire and water, till justice was satisfied of his insolvency being involuntary, a misfortune and not a guilt. Thus were the rights of creditors deemed so sacred, that the payment of debts was held even a religious duty.

This disposition, dear aunt, existed actually in those times, represented, by even very good authors, as times of barbarism, in which the Britons were supposed to be much such savages as the Cherokees or Catawbas of North-America, though nothing is more true than that all that is the most excellent, in our present constitution and laws, derives

derives to us from those very pretended savages, who were so uncivilised as to place the law above the sword, the greatest honor of which was, its being the guard of the law, and subordinate to it. These were the times in which Mr. Buckley plainly demonstrated to me, that the allodial system was in reign before it was supplanted by the feudal one, and that what of liberty we now enjoy is owing to the former, though we still retain too great a mixture of the latter. This, too, in one capital point, we have greatly corrupted, or at least put on a very false footing; the substitution of regiments, formed by general levies out of the mass of the people, to the antient provincial militias, which were attended with incomparably greater advantages. But, to enter on a discussion of this would be a digression within a digression.

To return, then, to the subject of civil process, in the case of debt. Let me here indulge the satisfaction of doing justice to a virtue wherever it is found. The French, who had from the Romans adopted the inhuman practice of throwing men into jail for insolvency, adopted it, however, with greater modification than we, and especially with one that does honor to their humanity. No man, after seventy years of age, is liable, as I am told, to personal imprisonment for debt, or can be held to it, if already in custody. The prison-doors are set open to him; and this, on the tender consideration, that to the infirmity and helplessness of that season of life, it would be cruelty to add the miseries of confinement. Old age has, in that respect, the privilege of its second childhood.

However, it is devoutly to be wished, since it is not, in the present prevalent
hardness

hardness of the human heart to be hoped, that this inveterate abuse may receive at least some mitigation, and that the laws, on that point, as they now stand, may be restored, in as great a measure as the general good will admit, to their antient humanity, and spirit of tenderness, for private liberty, in which public liberty has so great an interest. An amendment which might be atchieved without any sort of wound to private credit, that life of commerce, which is but the better provided for by the Bankrupt laws. Our periodical Acts of Insolvency, notwithstanding some particular instances of their being abused, favor, in general, this opinion. If that Act of Humanity is just at one time, what valid reason can there be assigned for its not being so at all times? Or should Humanity not keep an even tenor, but be exercised only by fits and starts; on occasions, too, where such acts are rather unmeaning, temporary

rary compliments to power, than favors of justice to the cause of human-kind?

It is not, dear aunt, that I have thus run into a digression unawares. I meant one, but not quite so long a one as that into which I have been betrayed by the matter of it; a fault, for the pardon of which I dare rely on the intercession of your heart. You will only be sorry that so good a cause is not in better hands, for the sake of your darling spirit of humanity, to which it will be but an incentive the more, the consideration of the unfashionableness of the subject. If the great are treated as they deserve for their paltry worthlessness, or their despicable follies, thousands of stupid sycophants and dirty time-servers are up in arms to curry favor with them, by repelling the attack, and by imputing it to mean envy. And who are these they pretend are so envied,
but

but such as are more properly objects of pity? Or else they ascribe it to a cinic insolence, when the truth is, that the want of respect is to one's self, in descending so low as to deign to unimadvert on them. Of advocates, then, perfectly worthy of them, they need fear no scarcity: there are always enow to step forth champions of the happy rich; but who takes the part of the unfortunate poor? Or who interceeds for humanity, expiring under lingering tortures? Expiring obscurely, unheeded, and especially to not one valuable purpose of justice or example.

Mr. Sumners, then, after his recovering his liberty, resumed his habitation at the farmer's, who had behaved to him with great tenderness and sensibility, insomuch as to offer to be his bail or security, which Mr. Sumners declined with, perhaps, too much delicacy.

cacy. His chief amusement used to be reading, angling, or shooting. It was on the occasion of the last that I happened to fall into his way, when, without too abrupt an impoliteness, of which his character was unsusceptible, he could not well avoid joining company with me. It was, then, that the little I saw of him gave me a great desire of his acquaintance, which it was not, however, without some difficulty, and the sacrifice of signal advances on my side, that I could obtain. But I was, in truth, richly overpaid for my pains. I have conversed with many, but never, in my life, met with such universal knowledge of men and things. He had been in the army from his infancy, and all the hours of leisure from the duty, study, and occupations of his profession, he had devoted to the cultivation of literature without pedantry, and of politics without party. And this turn was the
more

more meritorious in him, for his being perfectly sure that acquisitions of that kind were, in these times, more likely to be prejudicial than serviceable to him. But, independently of his being strongly impelled by his taste to the cultivation of his understanding, he had collaterally another object in it. This was the education of his only and darling son: which he held too sacred an incumbence to trust to any one but himself. Accordingly he made a conscience of previously satisfying himself, not only of every truth, but of the degree of value of every truth that he taught him, together with the manner of examining it by the lights of his own understanding. He recommended especially to him, the propriety and, indeed, the modesty of that kind of rational scepticism, which suspends decision till fair judgment shall have warranted it; warning him especially against the dangerous servility of too implicit assent.

Having

Having been ordered early to America with the national troops; his wife, the daughter of a Merchant of the city, whom he had married with little or no fortune, but who, it seems, made ample amends for that deficiency in the amiableness of her person and character, would not suffer him to proceed without her, and Leonard Sumners, their son, then a mere child. She did not, however, survive but a few days her landing in that country, being carried off by a distemper, too often fatal to new-comers. By this misfortune the care of the son devolved entirely on Captain Sumners, and he acquitted himself most worthily of it. It was in the midst of the wilds of America, and of all the fatigues of his duty, that his sweetest relief and refreshment was to accomplish this boy, at all points, and to give every virtue the best chance, by being the first in possession of his heart; not content with
forming

forming which, he proceeded to store his head with solid and essential knowledge in proportion to his growing susceptibility of instruction, which to judge of it by what Mr. Sumners related, as simple matter of fact, with great modesty, must have been prodigious.

To these accomplishments, he added that of accustoming him early to all the manly exercises, in a way to give hardiness to his constitution, and to inure him to fatigues. In these exercises he grew so amazing a proficient, that, without any prejudice to his studies, from which these were indulged him as relaxations, he came to surpass the savages themselves in all the points of bodily agility, dexterity, and valor, which they esteem so essential a part of personal merit. He was barely fourteen when he could outstrip the fleetest of them at running, or
defy

defy them to out-swim him in the roughest lakes, or cross the stream at a tremendously small distance from the fall of Niagara ; nor could one of them excel him as a marksman, whether with the bow or the gun. He was not superior to them only in the chase of the fox, the moose, or the elk, but would attack with more open intrepidity the bear and the panther. His father had often to tremble for his over-rashness in emulation, and in his daringly provoking dangers ; and yet could not find in his heart to damp his courage by restraining it.

However, just on the point of engaging in a skirmish with the French, some time before the siege of Quebec, his paternal tenderness had so far prevailed over him, that, though Leonard was tall and well formed for his years, he judged his age was a sufficient dispensation from exposing him to the chances
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of war. On this motive of caution, before he went himself, he gave his son in charge to a trusty old savage, with special order to keep him from the field till the action was over. But while Mr. Sumners was in the heat of it, he was not a little surprised, nor indeed a little concerned, to find his boy, with his little musquet and bayonet, fighting close at his side, crying, "Courage, father! I am with you." The solution of this sudden appearance was, that, in the noble impetuosity of his martial ardor, he had, without standing upon ceremony, knocked down the savage, who had not stood in the least on his guard, and whom he left sprawling, while snatching up his arms he flew to the scene of battle, and soon discovering where his father was engaged, gave him the terrible pleasure of seeing him at his side.

But he afforded him a much more pure joy, when, after the combat was
ceased,

ceased, by the victory declaring entirely on our side, Captain Sumners saw him busied in nothing but assisting the wounded, as they lay on the field, and assisting them, without any distinction of friend or enemy. He did more. As a French officer, left wounded on the field, was begging his life of one of our soldiers, the brute had twice snapped his pistol, which twice misgave, to blow out his brains; at sight of which, as he was prepared to make a third trial, Leonard pushed his hand aside, just as he was presenting the pistol a-fresh at the unfortunate officer. The soldier, enraged at this, turned the muzzle of it towards him, and firing it, the pistol this time went off, and the balls just grazing Leonard's head, went through his hat. At this, and at his cowardly cruelty to a suppliant enemy, his own comrades were so moved with indignation, that to a man clubbing their musquets, they knocked him

him

him down, and would infallibly have drubbed him to death, if Leonard had not effectually interposed to save him. After which, giving the soldiers a trifle to drink, he protected the French officer from being plundered, and leading him off the field, presented him as his prisoner to his father, by whom he was treated with the utmost tenderness and civility.

As to the poor savage, whom the blow given him by Leonard, to take off his opposition to his escape, had only stunned, with very little hurt, he not only begged his pardon, (which the other, the cause considered, readily granted him, with tears of joy to see him safe returned,) but gave him a very fine musquet, and a complete cloathing from head to foot.

In relating this story, I will not say that a father's just pride in so humane and valiant a son, especially at his age,
might

might not have some share; but it is certain, that he gave, at least, so great a part of the praise to the gallantry and native generosity of spirit in the British soldiers, that it could not be said he was not glad to introduce the narrative for the sake of doing justice to the virtues of his countrymen.

At the battle of Quebec, his son, though barely fifteen, greatly distinguished himself in that memorable action, when poor Wolfe, after having in his last official letter to the Secretary of State, pathetically and justly lamented his having been sent a sacrifice, sealed with his blood, the consummation of his complaint, falling himself the victim in the bosom of a victory, gained by a rash but necessary stroke of despair.

It was at this battle, that, while gallantly doing his duty, Captain Sumners received two gun-shot wounds, the
one

one with a ball that went quite through his body, not without a considerable offence, in its passage to the noble parts: the other was with another ball, that, not going through, lodged a little above the loins, but so that it could never be extracted. The consequences of these wounds were a total inability to continue the military profession, which he, therefore, quitted to return home, and retire on half-pay; under a languid infirm state of body, with few intervals from pains, and those at times very acute ones, which he bore with the most manly patience.

On a consideration of the sufferings of this worthy Gentleman, and of the mediocrity of his recompence for them, in the streights of half-pay, I could not, without indignation, help comparing his hard fate with that of some of the national leeches that had fattened on the blood

of the war; and whose monstrous fortunes, the produce of their country abandoned by the negligence of its Government to their unmerciful depredations, were at once a public scandal and calamity. What a contrast! Behold, on one hand, a true gentleman, and gallant Officer, dying, by inches, of wounds received in the acquittal of his duty to his country, or exposed to perish in a jail; and on the other, some dirty, low-born wretch, in virtue of a happy hit of calculation, or of some vile contractor's job, given him through ignorance or breach of the public trust, by the interest of some man of power as worthless as himself; behold such a one, I say, without having so much as seen the shadow of the dangers of war, rioting in the spoils of it, and insulting his own plundered country with gorgeous equipages, glittering side-boards of plate, and purchases of estates of which the unfortunate owners were reduced to the sale, by

by their being involved in the common misery of the times, brought on by the politics and management of those who made those fortunes, or were the cause of their being made.

Sometimes indeed Mr. Sumners would, in the midst of his pains, say, with even an unforced smile, that it was at least some mitigation of torture to him, to reflect that he had received his wounds in the cause of his country, and not in serving against it, like the unfortunate troops in Germany, whose valor was so cruelly misemployed on the very side diametrically opposite to the clearest interest of their country; on the side of, at bottom, the greatest friend to our greatest enemy; on the side of a Prince, from whose head had proceeded that transient hurricane, which, without any good to himself, had done so much mischief to mankind. Of this fatal epoch of false policy, with all its

successes in its train, so justly contemptible on the crazy foundations which had been laid for them, Mr. Sumners could never speak but with a virtuous and truly patriotic indignation. Consequently thereto, this consideration it was, that a brave and loyal subject, serving in the army, might, at the will of a worthless or corrupt ministry, supported by a deceived, or implicit Parliament, be sent on the most deplorable of all errands, on absurd, senseless, ruinous expeditions on the Continent, such as undoubtedly our last was, that made him disinclined to have his son liable or subjected to that horror, by his continuing in the army.

With all his profound regard, too, for discipline, which he looked upon as one of the most indispensable essentials of military force, he had, by reflexion, contracted a sovereign dislike of the army on the footing it stands at present. He observed
to

to me, that the French had been totally inflaved by the regular bands stolen in upon their constitution, which bad, very bad as it was before, compacted of a number of petty feudal tirants, was rendered still infinitely worse by the power centering in a single hand, which turned the state itself into a mere stratocracy, of which the King was Generalissimo, and in that quality was invested with all the terrors of a military despotism, and set above the Law, which was degraded into its tool and support. Whereas in Britain it had not, indeed, as yet, produced that ever execrable effect, slavery, thanks to the spirit and genius of liberty, so innate to Britons: but that it undoubtedly was, at bottom, the principal cause, direct and indirect, of that most enormous evil, the overwhelming pressure of the national debt. This, he observed, had brought on a worse state than that of beggary, which if not, as yet, slavery,

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had

had a manifest tendency to reduce us to it. That in the mean while, all the destructive causes were proceeding in full operation against us, without any thing material, or worth mentioning, so much as thought of to counter-act them. On the contrary, we were insensibly entering into perdition, and that so imminent, that a man of any foresight, might, with tolerable justness, calculate the moment of the catastrophe, unless some truly nationals, men of real worth and honor, touched with a salutary sense of the dangers of their bleeding country, should, ere yet too late, resolutely rise to her rescue, and join in earnest, to put the constitutional energy and powers into motion, and away with all this loathsome infernal nonsense under which she is so shamefully sinking. To such virtuous subjects, posts would appear only desirable as occasions of public service, or rewards of approved merit, not the vile prostituted
baits

baits of avarice, in which even ambition itself is absorbed. His reasons for this opinion were demonstrative ones, but it would be here too much out of place to specify them to you.

As to that great movement of the state, the necessary military force, he averred himself ready to make it as clear as the sun, that a militia, equivalent to the army, was perfectly practicable, and that there was no end attainable by an army that was not equally so by a well established constitutional militia, something in the nature of that in Switzerland. Of which, by the by, it is to be noted, that one single Canton, land-locked and surrounded as their country is by Papist-powers, itself at a distance of the sea, with hardly any trade or manufactures, could not only, in virtue of its militia, defend itself, but by the moderation, probity, management, and patriotism of

its government, keep out of debt, nay, amass the astonishing sum, for such a state, of more than a million and a half sterling, to throw into the funds of a nation, who had fifty times the reason, from advantages natural and acquired, to have twenty or thirty millions at least in store, instead of groaning under the load of a hundred and forty millions sterling, not a single shilling of which was ever borrowed on any exigency, but that of a false and unnational policy, on various pretences, palmed by a designing Court, on a generous, brave, and credulous people. A candidly commented history of the said debt, conducted thro' every parliamentary mortgage of the national revenue, would, to the impartial, prove this assertion, beyond a doubt.

All this, together with some personal observations on the preferences of interest to merit, and on the bad constitution

tion in general of the military establishment, made him peremptorily take his son out of the army, and trust his future fortune to some civil or mercantile employment. In this last view he had placed him, as before-mentioned, in a friend's compting-house, where he was, when he sent him to Holland, on some business, which I should imagine could not be very extraordinary, as in his mention of it, he seemed to lay no stress on the issue.

His son had not been long gone before the incident of his arrest, which I am apt to think he did not write to him, for fear of giving him an uneasiness that might interfere in his business, or bring him back prematurely. To the best of my remembrance, he slightly hinted this to me, in some of his more open moments. For in virtue of that unfeigned respect for him, with which he could not

but be sensible that he had inspired me, I had the honor of being admitted not only to the pleasure and profit of conversing with him, but even to some share of his confidence. In the course of it he had historically, and always with great indifference, not to say contempt, introduced the mention of his having been occasionally betraid into the personal acquaintance of some men of the first rank in the kingdom. This had made me, at first, wonder how, with his abilities to serve, instruct, and delight, they could be so little their own friends, as not to do themselves the honor of seeking to be essentially and permanently his. But my surprise soon ceased, on the very obvious reflexion, that such a character of real greatness as his, could never agree with their littleness. Even those very talents, to the reputation of which he might owe their vain barren curiosity for seeing him once, would be against their

their

their desire of seeing him twice. In his company they would feel, or imagine they felt, a sort of necessity for what on all things on earth they hold most in horror, thinking. Now thinking is to them a state so violent, that they are on tenterhooks till they get out of it; and in the mean while wish the cause of this torture to them at the devil. Pining out of their natural element of insipid futility, and unmeaning merriment, they are miserable till they rejoin their blessed compeers in tame, faint, ignoble mediocrity, or, lower yet, in absolute worthlessness. The “worshipful society” of triflers is the true fool’s paradise.

However, I was not to enjoy long the pleasure of so valuable an acquaintance as Mr. Sumners. It was but a very few days before Clara arrived, that he was taken suddenly so ill, of the consequence of his wounds, that he had barely time

to make his last disposition, which was chiefly that of leaving in my hands a packet sealed up, of family-papers, which he desired might be safely conveyed to Mr. Stanley's hands, who would take care to deliver them to his son, whom he mentioned with the most pathetic tenderness and regret ; saying, that his absence, just at that juncture, was even a consolation to him, as he was sensible of the pain which the sight of him in that condition would give him, and which it was so much better should be spared him. His death, he observed, could not, to his son, in the eye of his reason, be any cause of surprise, or of sorrow, considering that it was a relief from a life subject to such constant tortures, but that his presence at it might too much shock his excellent nature. He requested, that he might be buried in my parish-church, and soon after expired with the most pious fortitude, and the most placid resignation.

I wrote

I wrote immediately advice of his death to Mr. Stanley, who, with great expression of grief and esteem, left the care of his funeral entirely to me, with a desire that no cost might be spared, to make it decent and worthy of the deceased, for which he sent me an ample advance, excusing his not coming down himself, on the absence of his son, gone to Hamborough, on special affairs, which, however, would have been no obstacle, but for some extraordinary call of business, that would not allow of his leaving town.

You will naturally now ask, what is all this to Clara? Have patience, dear aunt, and you shall know, but not till the next post; for to tell you but the plain truth, I began this letter too late to save this, unless I break off, as I now actually do with the usual assurances.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT.



LETTER XXXIII.

Mr. EDWARD MELLEFONT to Mrs.
BUCKLEY.

Lancashire.

[*In Continuation.*]

CLARA was, I may say, but just arrived, when one day, as we were sitting after dinner in our fore-parlour, which looks to the door of the little spot of garden before the house, the noise of that door opening made us turn our eyes towards it, and behold! four men, with some others that followed out of curiosity, bringing in, on a handbarrow, a man, in a blue furtout, without any hat, all bathed in his own blood, senseless, and to all appearance rather dead than only dying.

Our

Our hall door being instantly opened, he was brought in, and laid on a couch, taken out of the parlor for that purpose. He seemed to be young; but there was no distinguishing any features of his face, it was, together with his hair, so covered with dust, and blood that gushed from two wounds in his head. He had also received a hurt in his right side, not, indeed, deep, but broad and jagged, so as to have more of the violent contusion in it than of a wound, though it had produced a great effusion of blood.

I dispatched a man instantly for a surgeon, and in the mean while those who had brought the stranger could give no other account than what they had from the post-boy, who had come with him from the last stage, and who was not yet returned from looking after the horse that was the cause of this accident.

The

The person so hurt, was, it seems, riding post, and setting his horse carelessly, being probably so much absorbed in other thoughts, that, not heeding any thing on the road before him, he was unprepared for the sudden start of his horse, at a sight of the carcase of a dead one which lay in the way; a start aside from it with such a violence, that it flung him against the ragged stump of a tree hard by, stuck with some dry branches, so sharp-pointed, that they ran into his head in two places, bruised his face and side, so as, upon the whole, to have greatly disfigured him, besides stunning him to such a degree, that he was taken up for dead.

This accident not being forty yards from where I live, which was the nearest place of any likely to afford him assistance, if not too late, some who had joined to lift him from the ground, and to place him on a gardener's barrow for convenience

venience of carriage, judged very rightly that they could not do better than to bring him to my house.

Mr. Atkins, the surgeon, living but half a mile off, being luckily in the way, came immediately, though not before the stranger had given some signs of returning life and sense. On his arrival, he visited his hurts and wounds, and pronounced them more alarming in the appearance than dangerous in the reality ; and that as to his trance, he apprehended he was only stunned with the violence of the blow, and hoped it would have no worse consequences, which were, indeed, sometimes the case of contusions of the head ; but that, in all states of the case, rest and composure of body and mind were essentially requisite.

In a very few minutes, the stranger was so far recovered, that he opened his
eyes,

eyes, stared wildly about him, while raising his head from the bolster of the couch, he leaned on his hand, and coming to his speech, the first use he made of it was to thank us very politely for the assistance we were giving him: And the next was to ask us how far he might be from Kettleby-farm? That question instantly gave us all to know what the greatest probability is that you have already anticipated, his being son to Mr. Sumners, whose residence had been precisely at the place so called. On my telling him the small distance, he seemed greatly pleased, and asked me if Mr. Sumners was still there, by which I found he was unapprized of his decease. While I was hesitating my answer, the surgeon, who knew the father very well, and had attended him in his last illness, relieved, with more presence of mind, my embarrassment, by telling him, that his father was gone upon some indispensable

fable

fable call, but believed he was very well, and much better than he had been years before: at which the poor young gentleman's eyes sparkled with joy. Alas! how soon to be cruelly undeceived of the sense in which he understood it, and of which the imposition was purely meant in tenderness to his present condition, when the shock of the mournful truth might have been fatal, or at least greatly hurtful to him.

Common humanity would have of itself alone induced us to take the utmost care of the greatest stranger, in such a circumstance; but now the knowledge of him made still a greater point of our concern for him. Clara, solely moved by a principle of compassion, exerted herself with all the officiousness of a good heart, in assisting my wife in her dispositions for preparing an apartment, and every thing proper in his case; moved

moved especially by the consideration of the peculiarity of it: A young gentleman thus grievously hurt on his return to a father, whom he would find dead, and who, in all probability, must have left him in very indifferent circumstances. All this only the more recommended him to her tender commiseration, and drew tears of it from her softness, even before she could properly be said to have seen him. For the blood from the wounds in his head, mixed with the dust amidst which he had fallen, had so disfigured his face, as not so much as to afford a guess at the features of it. But after it had been, by the surgeon's care and direction, cleansed, and restored to its native honors, it is not easy to conceive the difference it made to his advantage. It is not possible to imagine a more noble, a more engaging countenance; while what paleness from effusion
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of blood took from its vividness of color, was made up to him in attractions of tenderness and compassion, by softening somewhat of an air of command in the not unpleasing sternness of a brow, which in youth is a zest of manly beauty, that tempers its softness, and defends it from effeminacy. In harmony with his face is the whole of his form, cast in the most exquisite model for shape, stature, and proportion. Then his port, manner, and air, have something uncommonly great in them: he might have passed for one of the first nobility, in the times when those of that class derived their air of distinction from elevation of sentiment, and from a stern disdain for any thing little or dishonorable; before indolence, avarice, and meanness of spirit had, by an habitual impression, given them a trivial ignoble countenance, only the more ridiculous, and the more remarkable, for that strut of
of

of insolence, which they preserve in the midst of all their debasement, and which they take for a fine air of state and importance, though it is but a symptom the more of their beggarly want of true dignity. But leaving these pretious companions in worthlessness with my charitable wish for their waking, happily for themselves, happily for their country, out of their portentously stupid dream of the possibility of forcing respect, by laying upon a barren ground of vanity the false and poorer yet manure of dirty gains by venality, let me proceed to do but justice to Mr. Sumners. It is easy to discern instantly in him a native greatness of spirit, set off with so amiable a grace of ease and sweetness of temper, as, combined with his bloom of youth, and a figure formed to please, can hardly fail of prepossessing strongly in his favor.

As soon then as the surgeon gave leave for a visit to him in his room, my wife, sister,

sister and I went in to pay our respects, and to assure him that all imaginable care would be taken of him, with request to him to tranquillise himself thoroughly, as one of the most effectual means for his speedy recovery. But while Clara was acquitting herself of her compliment, the most indifferent by-standers could hardly have escaped observing the impression she made on him, of surprise, mixed with something more powerful, more tender than surprise. His gaze was as intense, as politeness would admit. He appeared confounded, motionless, and, after a length of pause, could hardly articulate, in breaks and confusedly, an answer to her civility: It would be premature to say, that his appearance had on her an effect, in any degree like or approaching to that which hers had had on him. And yet, I thought I could discern in her looks, together with her surprise, a certain melancholic tenderness, such as I had never remarked

remarked in them before, and which, after all, might be nothing more than an expression of a sympathising mood.

After this, as often as it could be, without prejudice to his recovery, or without being disagreeable to himself, we gave him our company, to preserve him from the natural weariness of solitude in a strange house; and I cannot, consistently with truth, say, that Clara betrayed any aversion for contributing her share in her assistance at this discharge of our duty of hospitality.

As soon, then, as he was enough recovered for conversation not to be prejudicial to him, since the surgeon had so managed, as to make him easy about his stay with us, as more convenient than at his father's little apartment in Kettleby-farm, to which he had, at first, much insisted on being removed, but was grown more indifferent about that point; we
used

used our best endeavors to amuse, and especially to divert him from any impatience for the return of his father, till his health, grown more confirmed, would admit the cessation of this innocent fraud of concealing from him his death.

But in the mean while nothing did more real honor to his memory than the astonishing proficiency of his son, in all parts of learning, in all objects of the human inquiry. Yet no one could be less verbose than he was, a succinctness which was, strictly speaking, owing to his being a perfect master of every subject, on which we led him to speak. In every science, in every art, he had seized the precise point which threw the clearest light on the whole, and rendered it comprehensible, at one view, in all its parts. On my expressing my astonishment at the progress in learning, he had made, in such early youth: he at-

tributed it, to the fair representation of study, by his father, under the form of pleasure, without deceiving him as to its limitations of possible acquirement. Learning, he said, was a hill, of which if you should arrive at the summit, you can no more expect to touch the sky than if you had staid at the bottom: but then in the very act of ascending, you have a great deal of pleasure, and on your gaining the top you enjoy more delightful prospects, and a serener air, when thus got above those fogs of ignorance and prejudice, which involve those whom you will have left beneath you in the valley.

Yet all his profusion of knowledge was rather drawn from him by the course of a conversation, in which he always followed, and never led, than it came uncalled for, in any spirit of display. Every-thing he said, was so graced with
winning

winning modesty, with so unassuming, so diffident an air, as gave me the highest opinion of his understanding and character. But what the most amazed me was, his prodigious facility of transition from the most sublime subjects, of which he treated with the greatest command of thought, and language, to the merest arrantest trifles, into which he entered with as much ease and propriety, as if trifles had been his element, and he had studied nothing else all his life-time. By this means, he is the master of proportioning himself to every character, from the great Philosopher who thinks the most profoundly, down to the little Lord, who never thought in his life; from the consummate Scholar, and Statesman, versed in the abstrusest points of literature, and of policy, to the gay Lady, whose ideas never rose above the humble circle of such objects, as rib-

bons, laces, pompoons, the mysteries of the toilet, points of dress, fashions, routs, lap-dogs, or pretty fellows.

You will easily judge, however, that I anticipate here the discovery of his talents, which could not so unfold themselves, till after he was more thoroughly acquainted, more recovered, more at ease in his mind.

In the mean while, Clara, I dare aver it, at first, from nothing but her natural goodness, and disposition to pity, was, in doing the honors of the house, and of fulfilling the duty of hospitality, of great service to her sister, who, under favor of her assistance, and supplying her place, could have the more leisure for her domestic affairs, and the care of her children.

In the purity of this view, she occasionally attended the sick young gentleman,

man, and carried him in his broths, and such articles of diet as the surgeon allowed him; which he was observed to receive from her hands with transports of alacrity and satisfaction. Nor was she deficient in the good nature of yielding to the great desire he expressed of her sitting down, and whiling away the tedious moments of his chamber-confinement.

In a little time, however, we had some reason to think, that this frequentation, originally suggested by respects of civility, began, at length, to be granted to inclination. There appeared a most manifest revolution in Clara's temper and countenance. Her air was, from the openest, frankest gaiety, softened into a tender melancholy, her looks wore all the marks of an inward conflict between a growing passion and her reason, over which she probably dreaded the victory,

without having the power to form resolutely a wish against it. It must, no doubt, have cost her a violent struggle, to reflect on her refusal of some of the greatest matches in Britain, and on the waywardness of her fate, that was now captivating her to simply a young gentleman, in far from paramount circumstances, without any thing but his personal merit to recommend him, which is, indeed, a great consideration, but ought not, perhaps, to be the only one.

We have all of us, however, respected enough her secret, which it is not impossible may be a secret even to herself, not to disturb or disconcert her with our suspicions. Though I must own, I am not perfectly pleased at the course I imagine things are taking. Not that any interested motives sway with me in the least. If I mention Mr. Sumners's want of a competency, so obviously to be presumed from
from

from the streight circumstances in which his father died, a good part of my concern is for himself; I do not think Clara's provision a sufficient compensation for the bar and heavy incumbrance to him of the nuptial state, so young as he is; and at a time of life when setting out in quest of adventurous atchievements of fortune, there is no being too light-armed. Yet let me not take up sorrow at interest; all may still be for the best; and of this, at least, I am sure, I mean and wish the best. I think match-making rather a dangerous office; but on some occasions, not more so than match-breaking. Having, in fact, no controul over Clara, nor, indeed, desiring any, beyond the influence of the most tender friendship, I remain the more easy, for my being perfectly satisfied of her honor and discretion. A passion may gain some empire over her, but never beyond a certain point. Her clear-

spirited ideas of a happiness independent of ambition and fortune, may, perhaps, lead her to despise the false prejudices of the world, but will, I dare answer for her, never engage her to confound with them the just ones.

Mean while, her influence over Mr. Sumners has been of some service to him. You will easily imagine, that so fast as he recovered, we should be the less able to continue the concealment from him of his father's death. We had, indeed, had the early precaution, on finding that the moment he could hold a pen, he wrote to Mr. Stanley, in London, to send away to him, by the same post, a letter, containing the account of his fall, and of our suppression to him of his father's decease. This had had the effect of bringing Mr. Stanley down in person, who had, however, the discretion not to go in to Mr. Sumners abruptly ;
nor

to Mrs. BUCKLEY. 177

nor before he had consulted with us on the best means of breaking to him, with the least danger, the misfortune of his having lost his father, which it was every instant growing more and more impracticable to keep from his knowledge; especially, too, as he expressed some doubts of his well-being, from what he had heard on the road, of the indignity he had undergone of an arrest, and was inclining to impute his absence to that circumstance, which he had been, till latterly, tender of mentioning.

Considering, then, his manifestly favorable distinction of Clara, it was proposed to her, to take upon her the disclosure to him of that sad event; but we could not prevail on her to accept the commission; it went, she said, so much against her heart, to strike such a dagger to his, especially in his present condition. For our dispensing her from

this disagreeable task, she gave other reasons, so plausible, (though, by the by, I do not think she gave the true one at bottom) that we acquiesced in them.

Upon this Mr. Stanley engaged to hazard the discovery to Mr. Sumners; and being let in, they had a pretty long private conference; after which Mr. Stanley, almost immediately, set off on his return to town, where his presence was necessary. At taking leave of me, he put into my hand a bank note, more than sufficient to defray any incident charges, with many thanks, and a special, but very needless recommendation, of Mr. Sumners to our utmost care. He had offered to send down a surgeon from London, but Mr. Sumners, being perfectly satisfied of the skill and probity of Mr. Atkins, had rejected the proposal.

No

No sooner was Mr. Stanley gone, than there appeared in the young gentleman so visible an alteration for the worse, that we began to repent of not having waited still longer to undeceive him. The news had actually caused such a revolution in his mind, as had affected his body to such a degree, that it produced, what had been before kept off, a feverish heat: and the wound of his breast, which was precedently in a very promising way, began to break out afresh, not to mention other discouraging symptoms. His stomach especially turned against all sustenance, and there was great reason to fear that his grief and dejection would have very serious consequences.

It was now that Clara's task was to commence, which, I assure you, she made little or no difficulty of underta-

king, that of consolation, and of endeavoring to sooth and mitigate his affliction. But while she employed herself with all the zeal of sympathy, and not without efficacy, in this tender office of humanity, she was rather consulting the good of his health, than the safety of her own heart. The moving expression of his unaffected filial sorrows ; an expression which was even more in his air and looks than in his words, added greatly to the amiableness of his person ; so true it is, that the heart embellishes the exterior. Nothing, however, could so powerfully have affected Clara, considering her turn for sentimental tendernefs, and sympathy for the afflicted.

I am, then, much mistaken, if, under the favor of this mood of softness, a yet more tender passion has
not

not stoln unawares into her bosom, and taken possession of it. At least, I am pretty clear that she has all the symptoms. For her consolation, however, all appearances are false, or she is in no great danger of the inclination being all on her side. It is not difficult to discern at the bottom of all the boundless respect and modesty of this young gentleman, the profound impression it is, indeed, no great wonder Clara should have made on him; if you combine with the common effects of her beauty on all who see her, the additional charms of tendernefs in her offices of compassion, and, I may venture to say, in the dispositions of her heart so new, so strange to her, and which are so far from misbecoming her.

Such,

182 *To Mrs. BUCKLEY.*

Such, dear aunt, is the present position of things. Our Angelica has, I fancy, found her Medoro. Of this event I have, however, judged it my duty to apprize you, especially as you expressed such a concern for Clara, and for every thing that relates to her.

Yours, &c.

EDWARD MELLEFONT.

L E T.

To Mrs. BUCKLEY. 183



L E T T E R XXXIV.

Miss CLARA MAYNWARING to Mrs.
BUCKLEY.

Dear Madam,

Lancashire.

THAT cruel! that unjust brother of mine! But hold! do not let me abuse him too much; for there is, I am afraid, somewhat of truth in what he has written to you, and communicated to me; but, I hope, matters are not quite so desperate with me, as he makes them.

Respecting as I do the inviolable laws of candor, and the rights your friendship has to the clearest truth from me, I will not, nay, I need not dissemble,
what

what I am not conscious of its being a guilt, that I give to Mr. Sumners highly the preference over every one of his sex I have seen. I go farther. I do not deny that this preference is attended with a wish to please him, which in my life I never experienced for any one before him; and if, as I violently suspect it, there lurks, under that wish, any thing of that dreadful passion called Love, which I tremble to pronounce or write, so horridly have I been terrified both at the word and the thought, (Modesty, by your leave!) I will not offer to so much reason, to so much honor, as introduced it, the indignity of denying it, as if I could think sensibility to merit matter of reproach: Of this I am very sure, that every sentiment of my heart, might, on this occasion, stand the scrutiny of the severest virtue. And yet, to judge of the power of that passion, by what I feel of the little I know
of

of it myself, I accede, from my whole heart and soul, to the opinion of its being a dangerous one. I do not wonder that parents are so much afraid of it for their children, considering that often the happiness of their whole lives is at stake, on their making, or not making, a proper choice. Unfortunately, they are both liable to error, from very different causes. The old are generally governed in their choice for the young, by the thing on earth that has the least to do with love; interest: while the young are too often misled by their own unsuspecting truth and inexperience, into a reliance on the falsest pretences, under the seducing mask of that passion. Unhappy sex that we are, so commonly doomed to the fatal alternative of being sacrificed or betrayed!

Do not, then, dear Madam, do me the injustice to think, that, putting the consequences

sequences at the *worst* (I was really going to write, the *best*) of what my brother apprehends for me, I shall not have taken my resolution, without such a deliberation, as may do honor to my choice, and defend it as much as possible, from any air of weakness. Peace be to those romance-writers, and novelists, who are for ever painting love under the character of madness, and calculate its strength by its triumphs over reason ! In general, I fancy, they may be right enough ! But I hope that exceptions are not out of nature. I should rather imagine, that a love founded on the great principles of honor, reason, and virtue, must burn with a ten times brighter fierceness, than a love obscured or debased by the admixture of mean passions, or unworthy motives. In the consciousness, however, of my own weakness, I dare not be sure that I should, if I was unhappily in the case of it, renounce a passion for its not being

being authoris'd by reason, though I should certainly try ; but of this I may be very clear, that inclination can at least not be the weaker for its having reason on its side ; nor can I think otherwise, but that love is never so strong, so invincible, as when it is a virtue.

Upon a subject so delicate, and so new to me as this, a subject that mocks definition, and can, as I conceive it, be only reached by sentiment, I know too well your candor not to rely on it for your excusing my not saying more. I recommend myself, then, to your best construction, the hope of which is among the strongest incentives to the regulation of my conduct on my desire of deserving it.

Yours, &c.

CLARA MAYNWARING.



LETTER XXXV.

Mrs. BUCKLEY to Miss CLARA
MAYNWARING.

My dear and ever esteemed child,

IT is not easy for me to express the pleasure I received from Mr. Mellefont's two last letters, with your epilogue to them.

I never thought so ill of Clara as to doubt of her susceptibility of love. Nature, who has made her so amiable, would hardly, after she had turned out of her hands so finished a piece of work, use herself so ill, as to break off her communication with it; she would hardly bestow, all in vain, so many blessings as she has done upon you, under the curse, which,

to CLARA MAYNWARING. 189

which, as St. Catharine of Sienna so shrewdly and so justly observed, characterises the Devil, an incapacity of loving.

Nothing, too, was more likely, than that a passion, so often rebuffed in its attempt to gain admittance to your breast, under the passports of ambition and fortune, should, at length, surprize an entrance under the cover of a virtue, especially so lovely an one as that of pity.

Then, Mr. Mellefont's description of Mr. Sumners gives me so great an idea of him, that if I was not so near three-score, as, in honor to truth, I am obliged to confess myself, I verily think I could order a post-chaise to my door, and set out for my Nephew's in a hurry, to dispute him with you.

But, jesting a part, which by the by would not be very good-natured on a
subject

subject so serious to you, it is your choice of him, that fixes my belief of his not being without a very extraordinary merit, since he could make an impression on a heart so solid, so guarded as yours: it is not, in truth, from your having rejected so many splendid offers that I draw this conclusion; I have known more than one woman, who, after having refused very advantageous matches, have miserably thrown themselves away, on some despicable object of their sickly fancy, or wretched caprice. But I do you more justice; I as little suspect you of folly as of vice. Some of our sex, unhappily, and very consistently, conjoin both; you are infinitely above either.

In this case, it is the nature of the choice that for ever justifies or condemns; in which are necessarily implied, the inviolably sacred respects of duty to parents, and of the laws of honor, under
which

which a due degree of consideration of circumstances is undoubtedly included, as who would wish to be the cause of detriment or misery to the object of one's affection? But in this last clause, I only mean a just attention to the requisites of a competency for happiness, without taking into the account those superfluities, which oftner exclude than procure it.

With these reserves, which are so far from incompatible with a true affection that they are essential to it, for I do not suppose any one will give to a girl's running away with her father's coachman, or to a vicious old fellow's marrying his maid, the honorable name of love; with these reserves, I say, of duty and of honor, that passion has all the character of innocence, and is even under the special protection of virtue. Not death itself is hardly a tribute more certainly paid

paid by old age to nature, than love by youth. The spring might as well be without its verdure, as that season without its susceptibility of that passion: nor think, my Clara, there is in this any ludicrous looseness of casuistry. The horror and shame are to those who dare deny the bindingness of that law, of all the laws of nature the most sacred and the most innocent, the law of moral love. The abuse of that instinct is, doubtless, indefensibly bad, but perhaps not essentially worse than the infernal practice of exacting, under a most blasphemously false color of religion, a solemn vow of disobedience to one of Heaven's commands the most explicitly signified by revelation and nature.

As I have, then, but the more esteemed you for your virtuous and honorable refusal of offers from such as either had not been able to inspire you
with

to CLARA MAYNWARING. 193

with a liking sufficient to justify your yielding, or were forbidden to you by an invincible bar of justice or honor, I shall not, I assure you, esteem you the less, for not holding out, where there exist no such objections, as are founded on those laudable principles, which made your resistance a virtue.

There is even in the choice to which you now seem inclined, manifestly clear as it is of views of interest or ambition, something noble, magnanimous, worthy, in short, of Clara: and as you have a moral assurance of Mr. Sumners's character, there is no great hazard of your distinction of him being lost upon him, or of his not being sensible of its value. On this occasion your greatest honor appears to me, what, however, is no wonder, in perfect harmony with your greatest happiness.

In all this, my worthy girl, I am the freer of my sentiments in favor of your inclination, not only because I think it a virtuous one, but as I am sensible your modesty needs, perhaps, this friendly encouragement.

As to the news of the town, as you, doubtless, see the public papers, the marriage mentioned in them of one of your acquaintance, and nothing more than your acquaintance, will hardly have escaped your notice; Miss Bloomsworth to Billy Grinly, that egregious feather-headed fop, whose rage for rendering by all the powers of dress, that horrid figure of his somewhat more tolerable, would have been so much in vain to any but such an idiot as herself. You must have seen him, I fancy; nay, if I remember right, he was one of your dangles, till you drove him from you, as you would any other noisome insect, that pestered you
with

with his buz. She caught, it seems, the little animal at Court, one drawing-room night, or rather it caught her with a taudry tasteless birth-day-suit, in which he was fluttering about like the king of the butterflies.

She had been, for some time before, courted by Mr. Plowdon, of rather a superior fortune to his, and who had nothing against him, but a certain roughness, and unpoliteness of character, which concealed much solid sense and worth. This too was owing to a neglect of his education by his father, one of the most determinate fox-hunters that ever nobly risked his neck over a five-bar-gate; a neck which however was, at length, broke, in too ardent a pursuit of the glories of the chace. These two suitors Miss Bloomsworth weighed in scales, of which not solid judgment, but sickly Fancy held the ballance, and accordingly

the lightest in the eye of taste proved the heaviest with the Fair one, and Plowdon had the good fortune to kick the beam. Grinly was the elect of a heart only made for trifles. She had not the sense to consider that in such a flimsy coxcomb, there was not the stuff ever to make a man; whereas, in the rustic, there was a solidity of substance, that wanted only the polish which it was very capable of receiving. Out of a block of marble, in the greatest roughness of its first chippings, there may be formed the noblest statue; but what the deuce can you make better of a human-figured stick out of a toy-shop than a frippery rag-doll? Besides, to love a clown may be but a trespass against opinion, but to love a fop, is a sin against nature.

Well, but there has been another marriage which you could not see in the papers, because, for certain reasons of decency

decency and family-regard, which will be obvious to you, it was expressly kept out of them, and the ceremony but three nights ago performed with the utmost privacy, in the presence of a very few select persons. “Ay, but what marriage?” I wonder at your assurance in asking me such a question; as if you had not yourself been present at the nuptials of Lord Soberton and Lady Harriet. Nay, do not stare. “What, I Clara Maynwaring, at that time in Lancashire at two hundred miles distance, I assist at a wedding in London? indeed Mrs. Buckley, I am sorry for you, but you really doat.”—Abuse me as much as you please, but I do aver, and will maintain it, that you, yes, once more you, was at that same wedding; I do not say, mark me, quite, in your own proper person, but, virtually, through me, the self constituted proxy for you on that occasion, at the

earnest request of the two parties. So that the old, fat, ugly, Mrs. Buckley, had the honor of representing the young, blooming, beautiful Clara, of which, I assure you, I was not a little proud, nor a little welcome there; as I am perfectly satisfied that the news will be to you.

But I have here anticipated some material events. As soon as Lord Soberton had finished the ultimate arrangements for the nuptial ceremony, he came to my house, and with the most cordial expressions of friendship and esteem acquainted me of every thing being fixed, and entreated, in Lady Harriet's name and yours, my presence at it, in acquittal of your promise of being one of her bride-maids.

But what sovereignly pleased me, was, his telling me, that he had disdained to impose

impose himself on Lady Harriet, under the slur, though but of a consciousness to himself, of a secret offence. The way he took to break it to her was not amiss, considering the fairness of the step. He threw himself at her feet, and seriously declared to her, that he would not quit that posture, till she should sincerely, and from her heart, pronounce his pardon for a fault he was going to confess to her. You may guess the answer of a woman, who, you are sensible, adores him ; and, perhaps, the rogue knew it too. However, after securing his terms of an absolute unreserved remission, he, with all the proper softenings, confessed his wrong to her, and did full justice to your noble procedure on it, which solved, so much to your honor, the mystery of your sudden disappearance.

The manner in which she took this discovery, for it certainly was one to her,

my Lord told me, had raised her infinitely in his opinion. Without betraying any emotions of anger, or vulgar jealousy, she gave him so much credit for the frankness and generosity of his confession, that she did not suffer him to endure a moment's pain of uncertainty about her sentiments. Not content with immediately granting her forgiveness, as ample as he could desire it, she, without meanness, or weakness, set herself to soothe his confusion, and even to suggest excuses for his failure, which she principally took from her allowance of your transcendent merit. She saw, in short, too much, and too justly in this his acknowledgment of an error, the sincerity of his regret, and the solidity of his return, not to let the sense of her wrong, be absorbed in the joy of his readiness to repair it.

As for you, she wanted words to express her sense of your worthiness. You
had

200
to CLARA MAYNWARING. 201
had not so much surprised her, as you
overwhelmed her with the dignity of
your conduct.

I dare swear she built altars to you in
her heart. In her estimate it required a
superhuman power to withstand the
offer of a Lord Soberton, that god of
her idolatry. And, to do him but justice,
he is a prodigy of worth, an illustrious
exception indeed to the despicable gene-
rality of his fellow-nobles.

It was, then, with a transport of the
most grateful delight, that she hailed his
proposal of a nuptial present to you of
her jewels, to which, however, she would
not consent, without adding to them a
thousand pounds in a bank-note, which,
together with a deed of gift in her name,
of an estate and mansion-house in Surrey,
of about two hundred and forty pounds
a year, will instantly be forwarded to you
in a box, by a safe messenger. As to the

estate, it is originally a donation from Lord Soberton to Lady Harriet, in order to her conveyance of it to you, as being presumably more satisfactory to your delicacy.

There is more yet : Lord Soberton bestows on my nephew the living of Welborough, which is a good seven hundred a-year, not to mention his assurances of future patronage, of which I dare guarantee the sincerity. But all this will be better explained to you in their joint-letter, which goes in the box, and which is conceived in terms so respectful, that the manner surpasses the benefit.

And now, good folks, (I address myself to you now in family,) I have undertaken for you, that you shall not refuse the munificence offered you, on the foot of the most honorable regard and esteem. This would not only be false heroics,
but

but high treason against friendship; for of this I am sure, your non-acceptance would make Lady Harriet very unhappy: and as for me, besides that I should be piqued at your not doing honor to my engagement for you, I would go and swear to whoever would hear me, that Clara especially refused them, in dudgeon, because you and she were sorry, upon second thoughts, for her letting Lord Soberton slip through her fingers. So, pray, let me have at least no vain scruples; for as to just ones, you will find me very ready to admit them.

But, dear Clara, (I now write singly to you,) the Lovell-family has still another obligation to you, and a very essential one, that of the real and thorough reformation of Earl Lovell. There never was so complete a change of conduct, which he himself frankly attributes to your being the cause of his opening his

eyes on his folly and worthlessness of character. But no entreaties of Lady Lovell could prevail on him to break the resolution which he took, on your refusal of him, to go abroad, and seek, in travels, a dissipation of his discontent, at his not having succeeded with you. He proposes, too, to go exactly the same tour of Europe, which he took when he made it in pure complaisance to fashion, and gives for his reason, that he is sure every thing will appear, to his eyes of observation, as new as if he had never seen them with those unmeaning ones, with which he went abroad the first time; and carried, like the snail, too much of home on his back, to make any progress in the knowledge of men and things. His mother and Lady Harriet are both sorry for his being lost to them, just as you had restored him both to them and to himself; but especially Lady Lovell repents, from her whole soul, her having opposed,

opposed, what she would now ardently wish, his happiness with you, on a supposition, that you might perhaps yet be brought over. Lord Lovell, however, is himself more justly persuaded of the impossibility, which confirms him in his determination to leave the kingdom for a while. He sets out next week, having only staid so long to assist at his sister's nuptials.

And now, Clara, suffer me to offer you my fervent wishes, of what, however, I make not the least doubt, that the choice of your heart may make you ample amends for your noble contempt of title and fortune, so often at your feet, and which you have so virtuously rejected, for their not being presented to you by the hands of Love and Honor. But even independently of that event, what joy could title or fortune give you, equal to what you must at this moment derive,
from

from your reflexion on your having adhered unalterably to your principles! This is a real heaven you will have formed in your own bosom; and how superior that permanent internal one to the transitory fools-paradise of stupid greatness and infamous opulence! There is not, surely, a general axiom more sacredly true, than that we are essentially happier by virtuous sacrifices, than by weak indulgences.

Adieu, yours, &c.

LUCY BUCKLEY.

L E T.

from your reflection on your having ad-
hered unflinchingly to your principles!

formed in your own bosom, and how

LETTER XXXVI.

Mr. LEONARD SUMNERS to Mr.
CHARLES STANLEY, Merchant,
at Hamborough.

IT is, my dear friend, to you that,
your father only excepted, I write
the first, on my recovery of the ability
to hold a pen, after the misfortune of
which he will before now have acquainted
you.

You cannot conceive what a disap-
pointment it is to me, for many reasons,
not to find you returned to England,
from your Hamborough expedition.
In my present situation you would have
been of great consolation and service to
me.

I do

I do not, however, forget you, and as yet not released from the confinement to which those hurts have condemned me, that I received from an accident rather burlesc than tragical, I seize what leasure is afforded me from that circumstance to acquit myself of my promise to you of the account of my success, whatever it should be, in the prospect on which I went to Holland, fore, indeed, against my will, as I was loth to leave a father, whom, as it has happened, I was never to see again; a father whom I supremely and deservedly loved and revered; a father languishing under pains and infirmities, and whom nothing less than his express command, could have obliged me to leave.

His reasons were nevertheless very cogent ones. You are sensible of the streightness of his circumstances, and of the passion he had for their taking a better

better turn, upon my account, more than upon his own. This led him to embrace for me the overture of Mr. Arnold, my grand-uncle by my mother's side, to whom I was naturally heir at law, being next in blood, and who, in a decrepid age, being eighty-six years old, had sent expressly for me to Amsterdam, where he had resided, in quality of Clerk and Merchant, from his tenderest infancy. But as his personal history is not foreign to my purpose, I give it you summarily here.

Born and bred till the age of fifteen in London, he had been by his father, who was not able to give him any fortune, placed, for his education, in the commercial way, in the compting-house at Amsterdam of Minheer Vanflieben, his correspondent, and a Merchant of some repute in that city, though originally only an orphan, without friends,
brought

brought up at the *Wees-house*, and who, at length, by his industry, had made his way in the world. With him, in the quality of Clerk, my uncle had lived several years, upon the hardest terms, and with barely an allowance of necessities of life, which had inured him to a habit of penury he was never afterwards able to shake off, though it had long ceased to be a necessity. For his master, all on a sudden, and without observing any intermediate degree, descended from the height of the most distant reserve to the level of the most friendly familiarity.

I have been told that this is not uncommon to the Merchants of this city, who exact, indeed, from their Clerks a long and strict probation, but when that is satisfactorily got over, they immediately take them to their tables, raise their stipends at once from two hundred to

two or three thousand florins a year, and often abandon to them the whole management of their concerns.

But Minheer Vanslieben had collaterally another motive. He had but one child, a natural daughter by a young woman of a reputable Burgher's family, who had been in a great measure, the cause of her fault, by their not consenting to her marrying him, and who, on the discovery of her pregnancy, treated her so ill that she died of their persecution, immediately after her delivery. Vanslieben naturally took care of the child; and was so faithful to the memory of the deceased, that he never would marry again.

On his daughter's being grown up, he pitched on this my grand-uncle, for her husband, having before satisfied himself of their mutual liking, and took him

him into partnership, which continued till Vanflieben's death, some years after.

Mrs. Arnold had brought with her not only a competent fortune and the share of a good business, but a disposition to carry economy much beyond those bounds where it ceases to be a virtue; in which she proved but too congenial to her husband, who was himself not a little touched with that miserable vice.

They had two sons, who both of them died young and issueless, the one, of the small-pox, in his father's house, the other at Batavia, where he had been very unnecessarily sent, on the pretext of making a fortune, while the real motive was the saving to them the expences of his maintenance. Nor do I find that they much regretted their children, avarice giving a sort of hardness of heart that makes it insensible to the feelings of Nature.

Mrs.

Mrs. Arnold survived them many years, and died something more than a twelvemonth ago, in a good old age, at which I do not much wonder, having observed, that from that very frugality, which is even a virtue when not owing to so great an evil as covetousness, there arises, however, one good, the preservation of health, if the prolongation of such miserable lives can properly be called a good. Mr. Arnold thus widowed, and left without a single relation, in Holland, for whom he could have any the least regard, and being, by many infallible symptoms, admonished of his own approaching end, turned, at length, his thoughts towards his own family in England, which he had for above half a century so totally neglected, that it cost him some pains of inquiry to discover his next heir in blood, to whom he was determined to leave his fortune and possessions, probably not so much from

from any motive of tendernefs, as merely from an impulse of the custom of preferring a relation to a stranger.

Having committed, then, this enquiry to Mr. Von-Hock, his correspondent in London, with proper indications, I was, after some research, discovered to be the person entitled; upon which Mr. Arnold signified his desire that I should go over to him, for some very specious reasons which he gave. Hereon, my father, who had hardly ever heard of this Arnold, so complete had his detachedness been from his family, and who had not conceived any great idea of the invitation, judged, however, that I should be wanting to myself, if I did not make a trip to see what there might be gained, and nothing could be lost but a little time, and some expence scarce worth mentioning, by this step of complaisance. He laid, then, his injunction on me to go,

go, and I accordingly took, alas! my last farewell of him.

As soon as I was arrived at Amsterdam, equipped with the most authentic testimonials of my identity of person, together with a letter of introduction from Mr. Van-Hock, I repaired directly to my uncle's house, which was far from a conspicuous one, though very commodiously situated near the Stadt-house. I was, on mentioning my name, received with as much civility as could be well expected from an honest old Swiss, who, having lived long in Holland, was, as our Cambridge-friend would say, hardened like a quill, by being Dutched, and who had probably never said a thing before in his life that was not dry or harsh. This man, who with his wife, as much stricken in years as himself, composed the whole domestic attendance of my uncle, who, he told me, was very ill,
but

but he would go instantly and acquaint him of my arrival.

In the mean while, I could not help taking notice of the furniture of the hall, or outer room, consisting of four broken-back chairs, and a table that appeared rickety with age, and of which one leaf, off the hinges, hung on the ground. Who does not know the mechanical force of appearance? My heart was chilled within me, at the sight of so cold and comfortless a prospect.

I was, however, after some little waiting, introduced to my uncle, in an inner apartment, very little better furnished, where he was sitting up in his bed, with the letters and papers I had brought him, on which he had just cast an eye. He appeared to me a venerable old man, but so much broken, so far gone in a decay of nature, that the first idea he excited in me was that of compassion.

I can-

I cannot say that he gave any great signs of emotion at the sight of me: on the contrary, I thought I remarked in him rather an insensibility, which finished the disheartening me. I was wrong. There was a double reason for it; first, the natural indifference of old age to every thing, especially under a mortal infirmity; and then his having contracted, by his long residence in Holland, a habit of the Dutch phlegm, which does not abound in outward demonstration, and yet, often, is not deficient in inward feelings. This was precisely the case of my uncle towards me. For after some inquiries into the state of our family, and thanking me, in his dry way, for the pleasure I was giving him, in letting him see me before he died, he ordered the proper public officers immediately to be sent for, and a will, he had ready prepared, with blanks for the purpose by him, was filled up, in the most valid and authen-

tic form, with my name and proper designations, as his sole heir, and executor, with not a single legacy besides, except of an annuity of four-hundred florins, to the old Swiss and his wife, for their lives.

It was high time he should take this step, if ever he was to take it ; for though after it he appeared rather on the mending hand, he did not survive it quite a week, during which, considering the nature of the disposition he had made in my favor, it is unconceivable with how cold a reserve, how superficial a regard, he received my dutiful attendance and service. Sometimes, indeed, his eyes, already dim with the shades of death, he would fix on me, with a faint expression in them of pleasure and approbation ; but then he would instantly take them off again, with a sigh, and air of regret. Very probably, it was less in
the

the light of his nearest relation that he looked on me, than in that of an heir, longing for his last moments to rob him of possessions, which nothing but his inability of carrying them with him, could have engaged him to leave to any one. If that was his idea of me, he wronged me greatly; but he furnished in it one of the strongest arguments against that money-mad avarice which leads its wretched votaries to accumulate wealth against that moment in which they are to cease for ever to want it, and in which it must pass to heirs, whom they must naturally hate, on the not improbable presumption of that joy at their death, for which their life will have so senselessly been employed to collect cause and matter; a life, the whole sad dirty ground-work of which will have been the thinking how to gain or save a sixpence.

I am sensible, indeed, that some have made of their innocent children an excuse for their sordid penury. One wretch of this kind I knew, who, against every call of generosity, or charity, used for ever to plead his being accountable to his dear children for every shilling he spent. He was, in fact, very rich: but as to those same dear children of his, and he had two, he would, for half-a-crown, have put them both into a pie, and for another half-a-crown eaten the pie, and hugged himself on being hired to save by it the expence of a meal. The truth was, that he starved to death one of them, and by ill usage broke the other's heart.

But abstracted from the laudable satisfaction of a parent's leaving to his children in a moderate provision, rather a spur to their virtuous industry, than, in an overgrown fortune, a cause of idleness,

ness, of worthlessness, and often of ruin, I cannot conceive what difference it can make to a man, whether he dies possessed of fifty millions or of not five shillings, unless to his greater regret in the first case.

I had, however, at first, been so much influenced by appearances at Mr. Arnold's, that I had written to my father, not to entertain over-high ideas of my expectancies; which I had room to believe were much less considerable than we had been made to believe.

Being now, by my uncle's direction, in quiet possession of every thing but his private closet and papers, I appeared, and indeed was, master of the house, in which he gave himself no longer any concern, leaving every thing to my disposition, in which, I dare assure you, I behaved with all the modesty and cir-

cumspection imaginable. He had, as his voice grew, like his perceptions, fainter and fainter, falteringly acquainted me, that the keys of his closet, and bureau, were under his bed's-head, which he desired me to take as soon as the breath should be out of his body. But, what you will think singular enough, when that happened, which was about ten in the morning, he was found to have expired, with his keys fast grasped in his right hand. The Swiss, who had faithfully attended him, and who knew him better than I, told me, he fancied it was in order to deliver them to me. May be so. I should otherwise have currently imputed it to his tenaciousness of a secret which these keys are now to discover, and of which I am very clear the honest Swiss himself was ignorant: since even to me, his designed heir, whom it so much concerned, he had not opened his lips about it.

The

The first leisure moment, then, after his death, and after giving the necessary direction for his funeral obsequies, in the manner which he himself had positively dictated, I went to the closet, unlocked the door of it, and the first thing that struck my eyes, was a pretty thick folio-book, laid on a kind of writing table, and which hastening to open, I found was a schedule or inventory of his whole fortune, written in the most legible hand, and in the clearest order.

Mr. Arnold had always passed for rich; but that being a vague general term, gives no positive idea of the specific degree of opulence which constitutes that title. Now, though, considering the nature and greatness of his dealings, combined with his spirit of parsimony, it was humanly speaking not possible for him to escape, as he had wished to do, the being reputed rich, contrary to the

common run of misers, who though they affect the outside of poverty, are nevertheless pleased with the reputation of wealth, and especially with the mean respect commonly paid to it. He had, however, by the most sedulous endeavours, and with the most guarded attention to the gratification of his and his wife's peculiar humor of concealment, so far succeeded, that no one's conjectures or suspicions had ever come near to the reality of that immense fortune, which he had amassed; and of which this book contained the clearest documents and indications. There were not only, in it, the respective references to his proofs of great property, in all the great Banks of Europe, such as those of London, Amsterdam, Venice, Genoa, the Steur of Saxony, &c. but to substantial securities of mortgages, of bills, of bonds from Public Companies, and of various other articles of that kind, and

and all of them most easily and most readily to be realised and converted into cash. There were also the deeds of two large estates, which he had purchased in Gloucester and Kent, in his own name, with only the more secrecy for his having affected none, unnoted by any but by such parties as were immediately concerned, and which I found he had, since my arrival, and without mentioning a syllable of it to myself, left to me by particular assignment, on a presumption, perhaps, that the general devise in his will was not sufficient. In short, I found that nothing had been omitted by him, that could enlighten or secure me, in obtaining or keeping possession of that great fortune, which he had bequeathed me; and so strictly speaking, great it was, that I was obliged to consume near a week in barely going over the various articles, and ascertaining their respective references: the whole amounting to

such a sum as I can hardly venture to specify to you. It was not only beyond my imagination, but beyond any wishes that I could have dared to form.

Then his books, which were kept with admirable accuracy, and in which I could observe but two hands, his own, and that of Mrs. Arnold, clearly pointed out the sources of this astonishing accumulation of wealth. It is true, there appeared on them fundry branches of dealing, but the principal spring-head was absolutely in our own Change-alley.

Mr. Arnold had, it seems, long made a profound study of the nature, essence, fluctuations, and causes of fluctuation of our stocks; by a constant series of bold and shrewd speculations, upon which he had improved an originally not inconsiderable capital into that stupendous

stupendous one of which I now found myself in possession.

He had not only made occasionally fundry trips to London, but had kept, till two or three years before his death, special messengers and advice-boats, stationed for the speedier conveyance to him of any intelligence that could affect his transactions in that way.

I found also afterwards, that, upon his plan of concealing the enormous swell of his fortune, he never made more bitter complaints of ill-luck, in that species of gaming, than when he had gained by it some considerable advantage.

But what was more singular yet, he most heartily despised this very branch of dealing, by which he was making these exorbitant profits. There was, however, in this nothing paradoxical. This very contempt gave him the greater

coolness both in his speculations and reduction of them to practice. Though our Jonathan's and Garraway's were to him, in virtue of his correspondences, the mines of Mexico and Peru, he treated, in confidential letters and conversation, the whole system of them, with the utmost disapprobation. Independently of the total needlessness of contracting the public debt on which they were founded, he saw nothing in the reigning practice of stock-jobbing, but the calenture of the year 1720, which had made so many take the South-Sea for green-fields, and drown themselves in it, since then converted into a continual flow fever, that would only the more certainly consume and destroy the body politic: and, indeed, what better could be expected? The fair spirit of commerce, the meritorious courage of attempting new discoveries, had seen the streams of wealth, that used to supply those salutary channels,

channels, perniciously diverted and running into that spurious one, the navigation on which, in paper-vessels, Mr. Arnold used, not quite unhumorously, to say, was, literally speaking, in the way of a trade-wind, or rather itself a wind-trade; since a paltry, ridiculous, unauthentic puff in the news-paper could make fair or foul weather, rise or fall the stocks. This he had often experienced; having sometimes gained from one to two, or more thousands of pounds by nonsense of this kind. And, in this course, his losing was comparatively very rare, which was owing to his superior knowledge and constant alertness at watching events, and gaining the earliest true intelligence, or at making the most of false. Considering, then, the advantages of a cool experienced gamester, at so long a run, amidst the passions of heated and unskilful players, the wonder was intirely taken off to me of his having
been

been able, in a term of near half a century's close application to that single object, to amass the fortune he did. The point of surprise lay in his having so effectually concealed it, to his endeavours at which he must have been little less than a slave.

The very disorders, however, and weak side of the stocks, which none knew better than he who had gotten so much by them, made him bethink himself in time of drawing out his great stake in them, and of realising the sums he had amassed in them.

Among other reasons, which he gave, in a letter to a friend, and which I will deduce to you more at large, when I have the pleasure of seeing you, he very sensibly observed, that the national debt could not go on augmenting *ad infinitum*; that it was more likely the fabric would first fall to the ground,
by

by its foundations being overbuilt: that if that case was not already in existence, it imminently threatened to be so. In the mean while, his availing himself of the current practice, did not hinder his making another not less judicious reflexion. On the trite but undeniable principle, that in all human affairs there is a certain line or measure beyond which there is no going with impunity, he averred it demonstrable, though the case was certainly a rare one, and even at the first view bordered on the paradoxical, that an excess of real wealth might, for reasons not difficult to give, be hurtful to a nation; and if so, how much more pernicious must be an overflow of fictitious wealth, such as actually exists in the prodigious glut of our paper-mill coinage; not the least of its mischiefs being that of raising, on so crazy a bottom, the prices of all the necessaries of life, to the manifest injury of the commu-

community, and especially of our commerce, foreign and domestic, the solid advantages of which have been so impolitically sacrificed to an unwholesome bloated appearance of false opulence, from a nation's being mortgaged without necessity, and posterity burthened without deserving it, and all without one valuable end being gained for it, but much the contrary.

In the fear, then, of worse, and with that spirit of caution so natural to the love of money, ever seeking its greatest security, Mr. Arnold had latterly begun to take measures for that thread's not breaking in his hands, on which his fortune in the funds hung, and sat about winding out of them, as snug and as unobserved as he could possibly contrive to do. I heartily hope, however, that his apprehensions were rather the produce of a timidity constitutional to himself,

self, than of a rational mistrust; and that the edifice of the stocks may be like the leaning tower of Asinelli near Bologna, which always appears to threaten a fall, without ever falling.

Upon the plan, then, of the solidest realisation, he, at length, converted the bulk of his fortune into various articles of the safest nature. Nor do I mention but as a very small part some bulses of diamonds and jewels, to a pretty large amount, which I found in the drawers of his bureau.

But there was one inconsistency which I confess struck me a good deal, considering his unquestionable knowledge and sense of the value of interest. Along the back part of the closet, there stood, on the floor, a range of thirteen chests, rather somewhat larger than the common size of the thousand-pound-ones for silver bullion, or dollars for exportation.

tion. On opening the chests, they were, according to the specification in his books, full of the gold coins of various nations.

But, I own, I could not conceive any satisfactory reason why he had thus suffered, at least some of them, to lie dead for many years, the cords, with which they were tied, being rotten with age. The interest of them must, in that presumable time, have amounted to near if not quite double the sum. However, there they were, and I immediately sent them, for security, to be deposited, for me, in the Bank of Amsterdam. This alone was clearly a princely fortune.

On finding, then, this glut of wealth so suddenly, so unexpectedly poured in upon me, how much was I not indebted to that philosophical cast of mind with which my father had inspired me, and which hindered my head from being turned with it? My great point then was,

was, to stand on my guard against that infatuating quality, for which opulence is so deservedly infamous : Fortune being so fond of Folly, that where she does not find men fools, she makes them so. Of one thing, however, I am very sure, that if I cannot ennoble my fortune by the use I hope to make of it, I shall ever spurn with disdain the thought of my fortune's ennobling me. Nor can I conceive any thing so very despicable as a money-made Lord, except a Lord by descent degraded, or, more properly speaking, unmade, by such a fordid attachment to lucre, as is absolutely incompatible with the ideas of honor, once annexed to that distinction ; but now pretty well abolished, since vanity is seen capable of erecting the very dirtiest money-grubs into Peers, as avarice is of sinking the most illustrious Peers into the arrantest money-grubs.

As

As soon, however, as I was clearly satisfied of every thing, I wrote my father a succinct account of my success, and gave the letter to Mr. Haynes, a Gentleman, who was going over to England, and whom I overtook, about a month afterwards, at Helvoetsluys, when he had, by a very uncommon accident of a contrary wind of so long a duration, been detained above three weeks, as he was waiting there to go by the packet; so that my poor father died without the satisfaction of knowing my succession to that fortune, which was so much endeared to me, by the prospect of sharing it with him, and of rendering the remainder of his life more easy, and more commodious.

During that month, I had so settled all affairs, and so securely quieted my possessions, that I could with perfect tranquillity quit Amsterdam, to return
to

to my native country, where I was determined to be intirely governed by my father's advice, and not even to take a single fervant or domestic, or make any the least show, till I should have his opinion and direction.

As to the honest old Swifs and his wife, who had been long faithful fervants to my uncle, I raised their annuity from four hundred to twelve hundred florins a-year; and, what will make you laugh, I could hardly prevail on them to accept it; not that they did not love money; not that they piqued themselves on generosity; but the augmentation appeared out of rule to them: in the hardness of their heads they had no conception but of the letter of the legacy, and almost dreaded some trap in the addition. However, they were soon convinced, thankful, and very well pleased.

But before I leave Holland, with which I conclude this letter, with reference

ence to the next post for continuation, allow me one summary stricture on the national character of the Dutch. By what I could see of them, in my very short stay in their country, where I was too much ingrossed by my private affairs, to make any valuable general observations, they appear to me to be, to the rest of mankind, what the bees are to the animal kingdom, a solitary kind of beings, hived a-part, the free-booters of every plant or flower that offers them honey, always murmuring, incessantly intent on their work, ready with their stings for any disturbers, industrious, but unfocial.

I am afraid, too, that their hive is liable to be pillaged by bad neighbours; but, as the old saw has it, "Let the Bees look to that."

I am, yours, &c.

LEONARD SUMNERS.



LETTER XXXVII.

Mr. LEONARD SUMNERS to Mr.
CHARLES STANLEY, Merchant
at Hamborough.

Lancashire.

RESUMING, dear Charles, where I broke off in my last, I am to tell you, that I embarked one morning at Helvoetsluys, and arrived so early the next at Harwich, that I could with the greatest ease lay my account with breakfasting at Trevil's, whose country-house lies but three miles out of Harwich on the northern road, just in my way as I was directly making my point for Lancashire, to my father's place of retirement.

It

It can, I presume, be no news to you, that by the unexpected dropping of two elder brothers, he is lately come to an estate of a good two thousand a year, besides a considerable sum in the funds: a windfall, that had raised him from the lowest circumstances imaginable, which you well know, to ease and affluence.

To say the truth, I prefigured to myself great pleasure in his being the first old acquaintance I should meet with in England, and in embracing him as doubly my brother, both in adversity and good-fortune. All my pain was, the fear of being so overwhelmed with caresses and civilities, that I should find it difficult to get away with that expedition, which my duty and desire to see my father required.

I proceeded, then, thither in a post-chaise, being pre-assured that he was at his seat. Stopping at the door, I sent up
my

my name, and after waiting a good deal longer in the servants hall than the urgency of my time would allow, at length down he came to me. I ran to embrace him, expecting to be met with outstretched arms, when I could not but observe, that he rather drew back and flinched from me, keeping his hands behind him, very probably a-cross, for the surer avoiding my shaking him by them. He contented himself, then, with only making a slight inclination of the head, in return for my cordial and friendly salutation. But what painter could do justice to that face of his? Such a mixture of forbidding reserve, and majestic haughtiness, as distanced every idea of familiar compellation!

This reception immediately struck me with the character of the man, and I was determined to enjoy it, and to give myself the sport of drawing him out to the utmost length of my line,

After, then, such a look, and such a how-d'ye, as made me plainly feel the wind was in a cold corner, and my sometime Pilades's friendship at the freezing point, he bid me welcome, with an air that gave him the lie, and satisfied me that he wished me at the devil. This gave me my cue; and I had the malice to tell him, I was just landed from Holland, where I had been on a certain affair, and being bound to the North, I was come to take a dinner with him.

He told me he was horridly out of luck that he could not have that pleasure, but that he was indispensably engaged to his neighbour Lord Gossamer. To Lord Gossamer! thought I; a wretch, that a man of any taste or honor would have preferred the penance of walking twenty miles barefoot, to the horror and stupidity of a quarter of an hour spent with him. I was only sorry within me
to

to believe, that, on this occasion, Trevil's excuse was a lie. Its being true, was what I should have wished for his punishment-fake. As to his pretended engagement, it was certainly no disappointment to me; who, sooner than dine with him, after what I had room to think of him, would have sat down to a meal with the hangman's helper.

He then offered me a dish of chocolate, but in so slight a manner, that I was obliged to refuse it, resolving to trust rather to the next stage for my breakfast.

But what shocked me beyond measure was, his telling me, with such an air of indifference, mixed with insult, of a distress befallen my father by an arrest, out of which he was, he added, immediately relieved by yours, that I could with great voluptuousness of scorn have spit in his face. This piece of news changed, how-

ever, my purpose of proceeding in a chaise, to that of riding post, for the sake of greater speed, and became remotely the cause of that fall, of which I am but just recovering.

I was by this time, all on fire to be gone, and yet could not resist the temptation of playing off my last reserve of sport with him. I then put on an humble grave face, and desired him to lend me twenty guineas, (observe, I said to *lend*, not to *pay*, though he owed me at least twice as much, which I had, at times, spared out of my poor pittance, to relieve him, in very ugly situations.) To this, "my dear friend," (you remember that was the name he used to give himself to me) answered, with a visage case-hardened against every impression of shame, that he really had no cash by him, but that if a guinea would be of any service to me, there it was, and
hoped

hoped he should see me in town, when he would do me any good office that lay in his power.

I took the guinea, and, to his great surprise, the window being open, I skimmed it out, with a smile of the most consummate disdain: an action for which I ask pardon of the poor, and vow to them a reparation for the wrong it did them, as it would have been better bestowed in charity to them, than thrown away, on the imaginary punishment of a fellow beneath it. Imaginary I call it, for I dare answer that he did not even feel it: or if he did, it was absorbed in his hugging himself on having saved the other nineteen.

Upon this, giving him such a look as he deserved, without speaking a word, I spun upon my heel, master enough of myself not to stoop to any explanation with

with him, or to satisfy him of my having fifty times, at least, the sum about me, in cash and notes, requisite to carry me to my journey's end. His thoughts were too much beneath my consideration, to throw away one of mine upon what they were, or might be.

On flinging myself into the chaise, which I was to change at the next stage, for post horses, I could not help recollecting your juster judgment of Trevil, in whom you had always seen the rascal through his hundred folds. You are sensible he knew a great deal of what is called the Town; and currently enough passed, in the jargon of it, for a devilish honest fellow. Neither did he want for a sort of wit; he could tell a story with some grace, humor a ballad, and fifty other small qualities, that took with one so young and unexperienced as I was.

was. I never could find in my heart to suspect him of not having one. But above all, his ingratitude was what shocked me, which, as one of our poets (Thompson) justly expresses it, is "high-treason against mankind." He had obligations to my father; he had obligations to me, who, had often watched his wants, that I might have the pleasure of preventing his application to me, on the fixed principle with me, that he who, knowing a friend's distress; and having it in his power to relieve him, does not from his own mere motion relieve him, has already in his heart denied him, or if he waits to do it, for his asking him, he oversells the benefit. You know I have even borrowed money of you to lend him, and, in that, did more for his wants, than I ever did for my own. And this was the retribution.

However, dear Charles, in this confession to you of my defect of judgment, in suffering such a wretch to impose himself on me for a friend, I am glad to make you honorable amends for my having, too crudely, imputed to you too great a severity of opinion, in your contempt of him.

I am also really obliged to him for this warning, which will have this good effect, that, in future, I shall be more cautious, but not more unwilling to do good offices. I even think myself piqued in honor, to atone by services to the worthy, for my folly of having so much misplaced my obligation on so ungrateful a monster. Yet, after all, is he such a monster, at least, in point of rarity? I am afraid not. I fancy he rather represents in general the WORLD.

But

to Mr. STANLEY. 249

But enough, and too much on so loathsome a subject. I have done with it for ever. And now an indispensable interruption hinders me from going on with my narrative. I refer you then to the next post.

Yours &c.

LEONARD SUMNERS.

M 5 L E T



LETTER XXXVIII.

Mr. LEONARD SUMNERS to Mr.
CHARLES STANLEY, *Merchant,*
at Hamborough.

IN my journey, dear Charles, to the Northward I met with no sinister accident, till, I may say, I touched the end of it, when I was flung from my horse, by a sudden start, and rather sorely than dangerously hurt. The particulars of it, your worthy father told me he had written to you, as well as of the kind deception employed to conceal from me, for some time, my father's death. The repetition here then would be superfluous.

I had

I had been carried, stunned and senseless, into Mr. Mellefont's, a clergyman of great worth, and goodness of character, where all the requisite assistance was instantly procured for me. As soon as I was in a condition to receive the visits of the family, Mr. Mellefont introduced his wife, attended by her younger sister, Miss Clara Maynwaring. But when this young lady came to pay me, in her turn, a compliment of condolence on my accident, during which, I could not help looking at her; I own to you that I must have made, even in the light of common civility, a most contemptible figure; for surely the most consummately ill-bred clown could hardly have exhibited a broader stare of surprise and wonder, at any object, than I did, just then, at the first sight of this miracle of beauty. It was a blaze that overpowered me: a rapture that kept my eyes motionless, and fixt on the divinest

face that in my life I ever beheld, I could, with pleasure, have answered her by an exclamation: "Angels, are ye, or are ye not all in Heaven? For surely this is a more than mortal beauty." Perhaps I should actually have broke out into some such intemperate fally of admiration, if I could have articulated my words clearly. I cannot be sure that what I did say was not worse, for I can safely swear, that I do not know what I said; nor, I believe, they either; my utterance was so confused and unintelligible. So much the better. No words could have done justice to my sentiments.

But when I reflected on the combination of the exquisite beauty of her most delicately featured countenance, enlivened with the freshest colors, and of the most perfect modeled shape, with the enchantment of her naturally melodious voice,

voice, now still more softened by that strain of tender pity, which melted on her tongue, and glistened in her eyes suffused with tears, my whole heart was forced to agree to the confession. I inwardly made to myself, that Clara fulfilled to me the sublimest idea of the power of her sex to charm, that the human imagination could form. And yet I did not then know half her excellencies: those of her mind were, if possible, equal to the perfections of her person.

Believe me, dear Charles, there is not a syllable of exaggeration in this. If you do me justice, you may remember that I am not of the most inflammable temper, and have seen very great beauties, with very little emotion. To say the truth, all the women that I had ever before seen, rose, to my recollection, in no better view, than as the common flowers of the field; while Clara appeared to me

the

the perennial rose to be worn in the bosom. It was reserved for her goodness to rivet the chains in which her beauty had begun to hold me.

It was, then, at some of those times which that hospitable family might judge hung heavy on my hands, in the course of my recovery, that Clara, in her turn, or supplementally for her sister, would bless me with her company, sit by me, pity my pains, and sooth my impatience. It was in those delightful moments that, without affectation, without intention of display, she let me discover in her so cultivated an understanding, such an admirable fund of sense, as defended her good nature from any suspicion of weakness, and exalted it into a virtue, which made all the other virtues in her, the more conspicuous and the more amiable. There was in her so graceful a modesty, so sweet an unpretendingness, such

such an unaffected ignorance of the power of her charms, as astonished and captivated me. Formed to be one of the greatest ornaments of society, she seemed, nevertheless, in her air and conversation, to breathe nothing so much as a taste for the shades of retirement, and the simplicity of domestic life. She was at that very time courted, followed, hard-pressed, by persons of the first distinction and fortune in the country, and declined them all without affecting it, and without, perhaps, herself knowing that she was declining them. And yet she did not disdain to come occasionally into my sick-room, and pass hours without any show of reluctance or disgust, granting to pity what she had denied to love. Nor, by any thing that ever escaped her to say, was I led to conjecture, what I afterwards learnt, by other means, that she had refused the most advantageous proposals

posals on the most honorable terms, for no reason assignable, but that of her not liking the parties enough to listen to them.

But what had the greatest power to enslave me, was the pure disinterestedness and nobility of sentiment, which were so unsuspiciously signalised, by her condescension, her assiduity, her care of one like me, in the character of an unfortunate and distressed person. To that very circumstance it was so plain, my owing her redoublement of attention to me, that I never let a hint escape me of that change of my fortune, of which, in the delicacy of my love, I absolutely should have been jealous.

And here let me confess a fault, and a great one. The passion with which she has inspired me : ——— But hold, do not let me give to so virtuous, so rational a love as mine, the name of a weakness ;

my

my love produced, however, a weakness. It was the cause, the undoubted cause, that the charms I found in her company, making me forgetful of the past, and improvident of the future, in favor of that enjoyment of the present, in which I was totally absorbed, contributed not a little to my meeting more than halfway their innocent deception of me, as to the fate of my poor father; and, though I certainly did not suspect his demise, to render me less solicitous than I ought to have been to procure more circumstantial intelligence about him. But when were credulity and neglect of duties not the failures of those in my condition? Lovers believe every thing like children, or break through every thing like madmen. I had greedily swallowed a gross enough illusion, and had omitted some very important incumbrances, both of filial regard, and of the dispatch of my affairs, which you will
easily

easily think were immediately urgent. But what of all that? I was in love to distraction, and thought of nothing but its object.

I was in this situation of mind, when your father came down to me, and, with the properest preparation, acquainted me of my father's death, and of the motives of tenderness from which it had been concealed from me. It was then that love yielded for a moment its empire to the feelings of nature; and I had nearly sunk under the severity of the stroke, but for the absolute dominion Clara had over me, even without knowing it herself. Her consolations assuaged, soothed, calmed, my grief, and amidst all the gloom of it, drew even smiles of joy from me, at her entering so compassionately into it, and especially at her continuance in the mistake (for I had desired your father not to mention my circumstances) of the
state

state of my fortune, as it helped to keep up that sentiment of pity, of which I felt all the advantages to my love, and, let me add, to my delicacy of love.

Another fault of lovers is, that they imagine every one, to whom they relate the progress and particulars of their success, is as interested in it as they are themselves. Conscious of this, dear Charles, I will spare you all the gradations thro' which I at length arrived at that critical step, a declaration.

I did not make it till I had, be it said without the least tincture of a coxcomb's vanity, prepared my success; and perhaps by nothing so much as by my real diffidence of it; till, to Clara's honor be it observed, it was from my high opinion of her clear spirit of candor, that I derived, at length, the necessary courage. I flattered myself, that I could not be mistaken in the hopes which her eyes,
her

her looks, her tone of voice gave me, of my having led her, by insensible degrees, from a sentiment of pity to a sentiment of esteem, and from that to a yet more tender one.

The necessity approaching of my removal, on the visible forwardness of my recovery, I had no time to lose. After, then, taking my resolution, on the first opportunity of Clara's being alone with me, I threw myself at her feet, and with all the modesty of a fear inseparable from genuine love, laid before her the state of my heart.

Clara, who had not suffered me to go on, till she had raised me from that suppliant posture, seemed to listen to all I said, without any sign of anger or displeasure. But when I expected her answer, she gave me no other than that of bursting out into tears and deep sighs. At this, nothing could equal my surprise,

prise, but my pain for having occasioned any thing like grief, to one for whom I would have laid down a thousand lives. I appeared, then, as I really was, under the greatest consternation and dejection of spirit. But I had not long to languish under this torturous suspense. As soon as Clara had recovered her speech, she desired me not to be alarmed or hurt at her expression of grief; that the cause of it was very far from injurious to me; since it was entirely owing, not to the novelty of her receiving declarations, to which it had never cost her any effort to give a peremptory denial, but that, in her present situation, her terror, her grief arose from the disposition, so new to her, of her own mind to listen to me, at the expence of that liberty of heart, which she had hitherto possessed, and which she had cherished as her supreme blessing. — That, having always thought nothing more dishonorable than dissimulation,

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tion, she would not now begin to use it with one who had inspired her with sentiments before unknown to her, and whose happiness was secure, if he made it depend on any thing in her power to contribute to it. This answer, she added, did not come from her easiness, or weakness, but from her judgment, which had decided every thing in my favor.

I had, dear Charles, often heard and read of instances of dying of joy ; I now do not believe a syllable of its possibility, or I could never have survived the rapture into which this her acceptance of my suit threw me. I remained mute with extasy. No matter. Such a silence had more of eloquence in it, than all that I could have had liberty enough of heart to utter. But, O power of Love ! O charm of sentiment ! what an increase of beauty did you not give to the divine Clara ! What a true glory did she not derive

derive from that noble superiority of her's, to the false honor of trifling with torture by prolonging suspense. What obligation had I not to her, for all the pain she spared me? I was, however, happy enough to make her sensible of all the esteem that my gratitude for this procedure, added to my love; she believed me, nay, readily believed me, and why? Not, I assure you, from any weakness of prepossession in my favor, but because I was sincere in all I said; and because truths from the heart are irresistible.

For the first time, then, I ventured to snatch her hand, and imprint on it a kiss, burning with the fervor of the purest sentiment; and she was rather struggling to withdraw it, when all on a sudden, Mr. Mellefont, followed by Mrs. Mellefont, came into the room, and surprized us, most certainly, without any design to
surprise

surprise us, and merely to bring Clara a letter just received by the post, and which they knew by the superscription to be from their aunt, one Mrs. Buckley.

I cannot say but I was somewhat hurt and confounded at their interruption of us, just at that critical juncture. But on a moment's reflection, recollecting myself, and before Clara could take the letter out of his hand, I addressed myself to Mr. Mellefont; and with an air of as little presumption, as if my fortune had been in no better a condition than what appearances placed it, I made the overture to him of my honorable pretensions to his sister. To do him but justice, he heard me with great politeness and respect, without answering a word, till fixing his eyes on Clara, who modestly dejected her's, and reading in her looks that this my application was not unauthorised by her consent; he told me, with
the

the best grace imaginable, that Clara's disposal of herself was intirely in her own power; that, nevertheless, if his opinion was of any weight with either, he did not wish to with-hold it: that from his whole soul he ratified her choice with the highest approbation, so far as what he was pleased to call my personal merit, was concerned; but that with as clear a contempt for mere respects of interest, as the spirit of his profession, superior to that wordly consideration could require, he was only afraid that the mediocrity of Clara's fortune might not suffice, so young as we were, for supporting the appearance his regard for us made him wish we should make; and that especially he was apprehensive of its throwing an obstacle in my way to the pushing my advancement, and to the bettering my circumstances.

(At this last hint I gave a smile, for which, I dare swear, they were all of

VOL. III. N them,

them, Clara included, at a loss to account.) He then went on with remonstrances drawn from the worthiest friendship, and the tenderest esteem for both of us, and concluded with observing, that he had not been in the least, in all he had said, meaning to refuse his concurrence to our determination, and that a reason was not a denial; as he would prove to us, by the alacrity with which he would acquit himself of the function of his office, in uniting us.

Upon this he gave his aunt's letter to Clara, who, in the stile of politeness, asking me leave to read it, withdrew towards the window. Mr. Mellefont and his wife remained with me, assuring me, very obligingly, that they were neither sorry nor surprised at this event, which they had anticipated by what they had observed of us both. We were, then, insensibly sliding into a perfect good under-

understanding, when Clara called to them both, and desired them to join with her in the re-perusal of his aunt's letter to her. I kept, in the mean while, at a little distance ; while presently Mr. Melfont ran to me, and taking me by the hand, told me, that certain points in that letter had greatly removed his objection, which, however, had never been a very violent one, to the incompetency of Clara's fortune for the happiness of both. At this I stared a little at him, and looking at Clara, who had followed him, I thought I observed her eyes sparkle with joy, which I afterwards found was owing to the share she took in the satisfaction of a certain Lady Harriet, of whom she had often spoken to me, without ever mentioning the sacrifice she had made of Lord Soberton's offers, to the truth of her friendship for her, and to her own strict ideas of honor.

As to the accessions to her fortune, mentioned in that letter, they were rather, it seems, matter of doubt with her as to the point of her accepting them, than of exultation. This doubt I was happily enabled soon to dissipate.

It was now high time for me, after my being thus nobly, indeed, convinced of the disinterestedness and purity of sentiments of this worthy family, to declare myself, and to leave not a shadow of scruple about my circumstances, which I had hitherto, with such an honorable intention, less myself dissembled, than I had suffered the appearances of them to subsist. After a proper preface, I laid open to them the real situation of my fortune, which could not but be superior to their most sanguine imaginations; and I laid it open with that true and unaffected indifference to it, which became one that had never entertained a thought of

of being obliged to it for any recommendation. And let me do justice to that clear-spirited family, and to Clara especially : I did not find that the discovery affected them much, or her, in the least, with any delight. On the contrary, I had reason to think myself happy, that it did not do me a prejudice in her opinion ; for nothing could be more certain, than that the presumed distress of my circumstances had not a little contributed to my winning her, by the sentiment of pity, which they had excited. In short, she barely forgave my not being so unfortunate as I had appeared.

However, all being now referred to myself, as to the acceptance of those offers contained in Mrs. Buckley's letters relating to Clara, I acquiesced in her receiving some jewels designed her for a wedding-present by Lady Harriet, on the footing of friendship, because I pro-

posed to contrive some return of twice the value. But the money which was to accompany them, Clara will absolutely refuse, with all the politeness due to the goodness of heart from which it is offered.

As to the donation of a small estate, in Lady Harriet's name, but which came originally from Lord Soberton, my delicacy would not allow of her having such an obligation to any one but myself, though surely the motive of the donation, does immortal honor to Clara's virtue and greatness of soul. Mr. Melfont takes it upon him to give a proper color and softening to this refusal; as well as to that of a living, very nobly offered him by the Marquess, but which his delicacy will not suffer him to accept, for reasons I cannot but highly approve; and, indeed, rejoice at, considering how much it is in my power and inclination

to

to make him ample amends for the self-denial.

Every thing, then, dear Charles, is settled perfectly to my desire. I only wait now the time that decency requires, for the celebration of the nuptials that will make me the happiest of mankind. I lay my account with my being fully recovered by then, and hope I may depend on your speedy return to this country, for more reasons than one, but for none so strong as that of friendship, and of my desire of gratefully proving mine to you, now it is in my power.

Yours, &c.

LEONARD SUMNERS.

L E T



L E T T E R XXXIX.

*Extract of a Letter from Mr. MELLEFONT
to Mrs. BUCKLEY.*

Lancashire.

— — THIS very day I have had the
exquisite pleasure of doing the office of
uniting the most amiable pair that I
know in the world; the thoroughly re-
covered Mr. Sumners to Clara Mayn-
waring, under the united auspices of
Love and Honor.

EDWARD MELLEFONT:

E N D.

ERRATA. Vol. III.

Page 22. l. 17. For state-watch-word, read stale watch-word.

54. l. 2. For on truth, read in truth.

90. l. 7. For loathsom horror, read length of loathsom horror.

135. l. 5. For unimadvert, read animadvert.

E N D.

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LONDON

Printed for T. Lowndes, at No 47
in Fleet-street

And W. Nicol, at No 21, in
St Paul's Church-yard.

MDCCLXXII



Cleland, John, 1709-1789

The Woman Of Honour In Three Volumes

Bd.: 3

London (1768)

P.o.angl. 471-3

urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10750917-3